

THE
PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR:
OR, AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,

IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE;
WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES IN THEIR PROPER PLACES
FOR FURTHER EXPLICATION,

AND
SERIOUS RECOLLECTIONS AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY CHAPTER.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL THINGS CONTAINED
IN THE PARAPHRASE, ESPECIALLY IN THE NOTES.

For the Use of the FAMILY and CLOSET.

BY JOHN GUYSE, D. D.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, AND
PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

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THE
PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR:

EXPOSITION

THE LAMBERT



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VOL. III

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LIST OF THE ARTISTS

PAUL, EMILIE, AND THE ROMANS

EDINBURGH

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1851

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A PRACTICAL

THE
P R E F A C E

TO THE
THIRD AND FOURTH VOLUMES,

CONTAINING

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,
AND PAUL'S EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS, CORINTHI-
ANS, GALATIANS, AND EPHESIANS.

THE favourable acceptance which the former volumes on the *Evangelists* have met with, among many serious Christians and worthy ministers; the good use, which (as I have often been informed) is continually made of them in multitudes of religious families, to their instruction and edification, especially on the Lord's day evenings; and the repeated importunity of many valuable friends, together with the advantage and pleasure that I find in studying the gospel-revelation, have encouraged me to proceed in the same manner on other parts of the New Testament. Having therefore obtained help of God to continue to this day, I have, at length, redeemed so much time from other services and avocations, as to carry on my design through the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, the *Epistle* to the *Romans*, and the two *Epistles* to the *Corinthians*, according to the proposals published a while ago. These give us a more perfect view of the scheme of Christianity than can be gathered from the *Evangelists*, who wrote the history of transactions that passed before the gospel-dispensation was set up in its full light and glory.

God preserving life and health, and capacities of close thinking, a few years longer, I propose, by his assistance, to go through the remainder of the New Testa-

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ment in *two* volumes more, of much the same size with the others; and to add, at the end, an *alphabetical table* of the principal things contained in the *Paraphrase*, and especially in the *Notes*, of all the *six* volumes. But I do not intend to let the world be troubled with any further proposals for a *subscription*, since it is to be presumed, that those who have purchased, and approve of what is already put into their hands, will scarce be backward to complete their set, with the additional advantage of so useful an *Index* to the *whole*: And to give them an opportunity of doing it, they may expect to see the *fifth* and *sixth* volumes advertised in the public papers, if ever they be finished.

As therefore I may not have such another, I would lay hold on the present occasion, to express my grateful sense of the friendly approbation of these labours, that has been discovered in the generous subscriptions to *this*, as well as to the former volumes: For *these*, though fewer than the first, are more than could be reasonably expected, considering how many of my acquaintance, who encouraged that, have been carried off by death in the compass of seven years; and how many other works, of a like nature, were offered to the public, about the same time with *this*; and especially considering the alarming troubles and dangers, confusions, losses, and expences, that attended the late detestable, unprovoked, and cruel rebellion against the best of kings and governments, at home; and the additional charges and obstructions to trade, that still arise from a long continued war with two formidable powers abroad.

THE reader may consult the Preface to the *Evangelists*, to lead him into the view and plan of my design, and into the method I have taken in composing the *Paraphrase*, *Notes*, and *Recollections*, and have recommended to be taken in reading them, either in the closet or family: Only I find, upon observation, that it may be best for the person that reads to others, to recite first the *Text*, and then the *Paraphrase*, verse

by verse, naming the *number* of the several verses, both in the Text and Paraphrase, as they come in course; and it may sometimes be proper to read the *Notes* belonging to any of the verses, as soon as the *Paraphrase* on the verse itself is gone through. But the references to texts and notes, that are put into parentheses in the Paraphrase, or Notes, may ordinarily be passed over in reading to a family, and consulted at leisure.

I CANNOT but own, that, as I have constantly aimed at a *practical*, as well as *doctrinal* and, (when I apprehended, to be useful) at a *critical* interpretation, and at giving as wide a scope to the mind of the Holy Ghost therein, as appeared to me to be consistent with the context, the Paraphrase on many verses may seem too long; and consequently may be drawn out, on some chapters, too far to be conveniently read at once, in the ordinary course of family religion. But, in such cases, I have rather chose to leave it to the discretion of the heads of families, to order how much shall be read at a time, than to break the chapters into *sections*, which might, perhaps, be deemed a disagreeable innovation, by some sincere and tenderly scrupulous souls, the least of which I would studiously avoid defending; and so, like the great apostle, *be made all lawful things to all men, that I may by all means gain some.* (1 Cor. ix. 19,—22.)

It is to be supposed, that various sentiments in the following performance may not suit the judgment and taste of Christians of every character; and I am not so vain as to imagine, that I must needs be always right, and they wrong, in every point in which we differ: But as I have honestly represented every text and context in the fairest manner, according to the light God has given me, equity and candour, Christianity and humanity, and all the just laws of free thinking, demand, that such would seriously and impartially read and consider the *evidence* that offers in the Paraphrase and Notes to support it; and I would recommend it to them to look, as I have always desired to do, to the

Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to lead them into the truth as it is in Jesus : And whether they may be convinced, that the sense given of some passages is the true meaning of them or not, I earnestly intreat, that they would not throw the book aside, upon a dislike of those parts of it ; but dismissing prejudices, would make a pious and candid use of the rest, in which I hope they will be entertained with many things, that, by the blessing of God, may be to their spiritual improvement in knowledge, faith, and practice.

THESE must be interwoven in the reader's aims and attainments, as they are in all the apostolic writings, if he would have a just and profitable view of the noble design of the gospel-revelation, according to *the holy scriptures. which are able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

If the Holy Spirit shall bless the present humble attempt for (which I desire the assistance of all my Christian friend's prayers) to answer this important end, to any of the present, or rising generation, I shall greatly rejoice, and ascribe the entire glory of it to the God of all grace, though Jesus Christ : For I trust the highest of my ambition is, to be approved of the Lord, as his, and, for his sake, as all his peoples, most sincerely and religiously devoted, though unworthy, ministering servant,

JOHN GUYSE,

LONDON,

Feb. 16, 1746-7.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE ancients generally agree that *Luke**, the beloved physician, (*Col. iv. 14.*) was the penman of this history, which refers back to, and stands in connection with, what he had wrote before in his Gospel, and is inscribed to the same person, viz. *Theophilus*, as appears by comparing *Acts i. 1.* with *Luke i. 3.* and so it may be esteemed as a second part of his history, which perhaps was wrote at the same time, or very soon after, and in the same book with the former, though *John*, who wrote last, is placed between them, for the convenience of having all the Gospels together.

In the former part, *Luke* gave an account of Christ from his birth to his death, resurrection, and ascension to glory; and in this, he draws a short sketch of what passed between our blessed Lord's resurrection and exaltation, and then carries on his narrative in an orderly series of what followed, in the wonderful effusion of the Spirit, and propagation of the gospel, first among the *Jews*, then among the devout *Gentiles*, chiefly under the ministry of the two great apostles *Peter* and *Paul*; and, last of all, among the *idolatrous* nations, who were *Paul's* peculiar province, and were converted by the power of divine grace, attending the discharge of his office to them: And this was sufficient for a specimen of what was done by his fellow-servants in the gospel, only allowing that this apostle of the *Gentiles* laboured more abundantly than they all, as he said of himself. (*1 Cor. xv. 10.*)

The first eight chapters indeed, which bring us to the conversion of *Saul*, relate to all the apostles together in *Jerusalem* and *Judea*, till they were scattered abroad, and preached the gospel in different countries; and they take in a particular account of *Stephen* and *Philip*, who were chosen to be deacons, and were apostolic men; yet even in those chapters, *Peter* is principally taken notice of; and from thenceforward

N O T E.

* Some learned men have thought that *Luke* was one of the seventy disciples; but others, that he was a later convert under *Paul's* ministry. See *Dr. Whitby's* preface to the gospel of *Luke*.

forward the history is in a manner confined to him and *Paul*: But as *Luke* became, in time, one of *Paul's* companions, and was an eye-witness to a great part of the things recorded as done by him; so he gives us the most particular and enlarged view of his travels, labours, and sufferings, of the triumphs of grace, by means of his ministry, over *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and of the churches planted and revisited by him, till his first imprisonment for two years at *Rome*, (chap. xxviii. 30.) with which this history ends, about thirty years after *Jesus* was exalted at the Father's right-hand.

C H A P. I.

A brief review of the history of Christ, especially after his death, 1, —8. His ascension to heaven from the mount of Olives, 9,—11. His disciples return to Jerusalem, and the choice of Matthias, to be an apostle in the room of Judas, 12,—26.

TEXT.

THE former treatise have I made, O *Theophilus*, of all that *Jesus* began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen;

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible

PARAPHRASE.

I *Luke*, have already given you, O *Theophilus*, (see the note on *Luke* i. 3i.) an authentic account in writing, of all that might be needful for your information and satisfaction about the many admirable things which *Jesus*, the great and only Saviour, taught and did, for laying the foundation of the Christian church, during his abode upon earth, till the very day that he ascended, and was received up to glory; which was after he, by an unmeasurable anointing of the Holy Spirit on himself, as the great Prophet of the church, and by a communication of it in some degrees to his apostles*, had instructed and commissioned them, had explained the nature and design of their office, and therewith charged them to observe his orders, whom he had chosen and set apart to be his witnesses, and the chief ministers of his kingdom.

3 To whom also, as I have informed you, (*Luke* xxiv.) he presented himself alive; after he had been put to the terrible death of the cross; and, in his wonderful and gracious condescension, gave them a

bundance

* Through the Holy Ghost, may relate either to Christ's giving the apostles their commission, or to his sitting and furnishing them for it; when he not only opened their understandings, but breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, (*John* xx. 22.) as an emblem and earnest of what he would soon further do, in a more plentiful effusion upon them: And the commandments he gave them, may relate either

to what he did of this kind before his death, or after his resurrection, when he said, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (*Mark* xvi. 15.) But as his appearing and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, after his resurrection, is mentioned in the next verse, it seems that what is here said, rather refers to what passed before his

fallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4. And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which *said* be, ye have heard of me.

5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with

abundance of remarkable and demonstrative evidences of his being really risen from the dead; (in *testimonies*) they having plainly seen him at several times, and on various occasions, for the space of forty days, between his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and having eat and drank, and familiarly conversed with him, (*chap. x. 41. and Luke xxiv.*) and been instructed by him in many particulars, that were proper to be then communicated to them, and insisted on in their preaching, relating to the kingdom of grace, which he would set up; and propagate with great success, by means of their ministrations, attended with the effusion of his Spirit in this world, and to the kingdom of glory, to which he was going, and in which all should be perfected in the world to come.

4. And at one of their solemn assemblies, in which he was present just before his ascension, he, to raise their faith, hope, and joy, with regard to the great things he would further do for them, and by them, ordered them not to return to their secular business in the country*, nor leave Jerusalem, how dangerous soever they might think it for them to continue there; nor yet enter immediately on their public ministry, for which he had given them commission; but to wait in a way of public and private exercises of devotion, and in a dependance upon his power, faithfulness, and grace, for an accomplishment of the promise of the Spirit, which his Father and their Father had given by the ancient prophets, relating to the Messiah's days, (*Isa. xlv. 3. and Joel ii. 28.*) and which he himself had often acquainted them with, and assured them should be fulfilled, and particularly a little before his death, at large, (*John xiv. xv. xvi. chapters*) for their encouragement and comfort, when he should be gone to the Father.

5. For, said he, according to John the Baptist's own testimony concerning himself and me, (*Luke iii. 16.*) he indeed initiated his disciples by baptism with water, and *that* was all that he could do; but I, by

NOTE

* Dr Lightfoot and some others have thought, that this assembly was when our Lord met his disciples, according to his own appointment, on a mountain in Galilee, (*Mat. xxviii. 16.*) where it is probable the five hundred brethren saw him at once, which the apostle speaks of, (*1 Cor. xv. 6.*) But Christ's here commanding the apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, carries an intimation, as if they were then there; and immediately hereupon, perhaps the very same day, our historian tells us, that Jesus *sent* them

out, as far as to the borders of Bethany in the mount of Olives, from whence they saw him ascend to heaven; and then speaks of their returning or going back again to Jerusalem, ver. 12. compared with *Luke xxiv. 50, 51, 52.* (See the note there.) Or Christ might first lead them to Bethany, from whence he took them with him to that part of the mount from which he ascended; and whilst he continued to bless them he was parted from them.

the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

a better baptism, which that prefigured, will shed down my Spirit with his gifts and graces in a plentiful manner upon you, that ye may be more than ever confirmed in your faith, sanctified, and comforted, and may be thoroughly qualified with wisdom, courage, and utterance, for the great work and office to which I have sent you; (see the note on *Matth. iii. 6.*) and that my church and ministering servants may have a memorable pledge of my spiritual presence with them, under the gospel dispensation, to the end of the world. And this he told them should be within a very little time; meaning as soon as the following Pentecost should come, which was ten days after his ascension; (*chap. ii. 1.* see the note there) though, to keep them continually waiting for him in his way, he did not think proper then to acquaint them with the precise time when it should be.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

6 The disciples apprehending that the resurrection of Christ had put him into a state that might favour their fond notions of his temporal dominion, which they still were willing to indulge; they therefore, at their last solemn meeting, (see the note on *ver. 4.*) put a question to him, saying, Lord, as thou art now risen a conqueror over death, and all thine enemies, Is this the time that we have been looking and longing for, when thou wilt set God's people *Israel* at liberty from every foreign yoke, and restore their nation to a state of grandeur, influence, and power, and bring all the princes and kingdoms of the earth in subjection to them, according to our own expectations from ancient prophecies of the great power and glory of the Messiah's reign? (*Dan. vii. 27.*) And what! Wilt thou now, after all, admit those of our rulers and countrymen to the high honours of this kingdom, who have offered so many indignities to thee, and so shamefully and cruelly put thee to death?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.

7 But (as) as the effusion of his Spirit would soon cure them of all their carnal sentiments about his kingdom, he, waving a reply to their mistaken notion in the question, gently checked their vain curiosity, saying to them, It neither belongs, nor would it be of any advantage to you, to know before-hand the exact time and circumstances in which the great revolutions, that are coming on, are to be wrought; these God, the sovereign Author and Disposer of all things, has reserved as a secret for the present in his own mind, who has authority to reveal them, or not, and will bring them to pass in the best manner, and in the fittest seasons, according to the counsel of his own will, whenever he pleases.

8 But ye shall receive

8 However, know ye for your comfort, that, wait

receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

weak and despicable as ye have hitherto been, ye shall receive much nobler powers of a spiritual kind than ye are aware of, for preaching and confirming the gospel of my kingdom, by the descent of the Holy Ghost on you; and hereupon ye shall go forth in my name to attest my resurrection, and publish the word of my grace, with holy liberty, wisdom, and courage, and with miraculous signs to confirm your testimony; and this shall be with great success*, first in *Jerusalem*, afterwards in all the land of *Judea*, and among your neighbours and kindred, the *Samaritans*, with whom this nation has been so long at variance, and to whom I formerly forbade your preaching; and then among the religious profelytes of the nations round about you; and last of all, among the idolatrous *Gentiles* far and wide, even to the most distant parts of the world.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

9 Then, whilst he was speaking in this authoritative, gracious, and affectionate manner to them, and pronouncing a blessing upon them, (*Luke xxiv. 51.*) to satisfy them that his heart was full of love at his parting with them, and that he would ever afterwards be mindful of them, he gradually mounted up in the air in their sight, as *Elijah* did in the view of *Elisba*, they continuing to look at him with the utmost care and attention, till their eyes could no longer discern him, by reason of a cloud of glory which inclosed him, and intercepted the ken of their eyes.

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel;

10 † And while they were thus eagerly looking up after him, and observing his ascent towards heaven, with consternation and intermingled grief and joy, with fear of losing him, and hope and desire of his returning to them, and while throngs of angels attended him, as his servants, to pay their homage and due honours to him, (*Psal. lxxviii. 17.*) Behold, a very remarkable circumstance! Two of the celestial host appeared in the form of men, and descending, came,

NOTES.

* Here our Lord specifies the order in which his commission was to be executed, as well as the extent of it, and the following parts of this history shew that accordingly, in fact, the apostles preached the gospel first at *Jerusalem*, (*chap. ii.—vii.*) then in various parts of *Palestine*, and among the *Samaritans*, on occasion of the great persecution of the church; (*chap. viii. ix.*) then to the *Gentile* profelytes of the gate; (*chap. x. xi. xii.*) and last of all to the idolatrous *Gentiles*, (*chap. xiii.* to the end of the book.)

from the dead, nor was there any occasion that they should, since their seeing him afterwards alive, and conversing with him, &c. were as undeniable proofs of his resurrection, as if they had stood by when he came out of the sepulchre. But he ascended to heaven in their sight, that they might be equally assured of his being gone thither, which seems to have been, not by a swift flight or rapture, but in a leisurely gradual manner, that they might be in no danger of being deceived, and might have the fairest opportunity of distinctly observing it.

† None of the disciples saw Christ rise

came, and stood near to the disciples, in robes of illustrious light, an emblem of their grandeur, purity, and joy.

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

11 And they addressed them in a familiar, kind, and encouraging manner, saying, O ye *Galileans*, who are the disciples and followers of Jesus, be not dismayed at his being thus taken from you: Why should ye still continue to stand looking so wishfully upwards to heaven, as if ye were expecting him to return immediately to you from thence? This very Jesus, who lately died for your sins, and rose again for your justification, and is now gone before you to heaven, to be enthroned in his kingdom there, shall as truly, visibly, and personally descend in a glorious cloud, and with a like retinue of angels, to judge the world at the last day, as ye have now seen him with your own eyes ascending into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for you. (See and compare *Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. 1 Theff. iv. 16. 2 Theff. i. 7. and Rev. i. 7.*)

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath-day's journey.

12 Then the disciples, being satisfied with the account the angels had given them, went back from the mount of *Olivet* to *Jerusalem*, in obedience to their Lord's instructions and commands, (*ver. 4.*) that they might wait with faith and patience for the descent of the Spirit upon them there, according to his promise, * *Jerusalem* being about a mile's distance from that part of the mountain which lay within the tract of ground that belonged to *Bethany*, (as was related, *Luke xxiv. 50.*) and from which he went up into heaven; and so at his taking leave of this world, as a triumphant conqueror, his feet stood upon the mount of *Olivet*, as was prophesied of him. (*Zech. xiv. 4.*)

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where

13 And upon the disciples arrival at *Jerusalem*, they daily attended the worship of God in the temple, (*Luke xxiv. 53.* see the note there) and frequently met in an upper apartment †, fit for their purpose,

to

N O T E S.

* *A Sabbath-day's journey* was, according to some, two thousand cubits, or a thousand yards, and according to others, about eight furlongs, or one of our miles. Thus far it was lawful for the *Jews* to travel on the Sabbath-day: Their cities, together with their suburbs, might be so long as to make it sometimes necessary for them to go so far to the synagogue; and as this is made a description of the distance between *Jerusalem* and that part of mount *Olivet* from which our Lord ascended, his ascending from *Bethany*, (*Luke xxiv. 50.* see the

note there) may be understood only of that part of the mount which lay within the borders of *Bethany*; for that town itself was fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*. *John xi. 18.*

† This *upper room* is thought by some to have been one of the upper chambers of the temple: But as these belonged to the priests, or at least were under their inspection, it can hardly be supposed that they would have permitted our Lord's disciples to meet there. I therefore take it to have been some upper room in one of their friend's houses, where they

where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

to carry on religious exercises together; and there they continued assembling, and waiting with faith, hope, and joy, for the Spirit, which Christ had told them should soon be poured out upon them from on high; particularly there were the eleven apostles whom Jesus had owned and favoured with his visits after his resurrection, and who were present at his ascension, viz. Peter, James, and John, who had likewise seen his transfiguration in the mount, and were eye-witnesses of his last sufferings in the garden; and together with them were Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, with Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James the less. (See an account of all these in the Paraphrase and note on *Mat. x. 2, 3, 4.*)

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

14 All these (*Judas Iscariot* having before left them, and execrably betrayed his Lord, and laid violent hands on himself) kept and joined together, as with one heart and soul, in humble, earnest, persevering, and believing petitions and pleas, as well as thanksgivings and praises, (*Luke xxiv. 53.*) which were addressed to the Lord Jesus*, and to the Father in his name, for an accomplishment of the great things they were looking for from him, to furnish them for the important services which he had assigned to them; and with these, many others cordially joined in this their religious employment, as particularly the holy women, that followed Christ from Galilee, attended him to his crucifixion, visited his sepulchre, and saw him after he was risen from the dead; and † Mary, the mother of our Lord, together with those of his kinsmen after the flesh, who by this time believed in him; and there were many others, as we shall presently observe.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in

15 Now at one of these solemn assemblies for prayer, at which were present about an hundred and twenty,

C 2

NOTES.

they assembled, as the Jews were wont to do in such places for religious worship, and where they might meet with the greater privacy. Some suppose it to have been that in which Jesus had celebrated the passover with his disciples. See *Universal History*, Vol. IV. p. 249.

* It is highly reasonable to suppose, that they directed their prayers to Christ, who had made them promises of sending the Spirit, when he should go to the Father, (*John xv. 26. and xvi. 7.*) as well as that they prayed to the Father in Christ's name, according to the order he had given them, *John xvi. 23, 26.* (See the note there.) And it seems every way

most natural to understand their prayer, *ver. 24.* as directed to the Lord Jesus; for all the apostles were at first immediately chosen by him, and were to be his witnesses whom he appointed and sent; and they had before believed in him, and spoke of him as their Lord, who knew the hearts of all men. *John xvi. 29, 30. and xxi. 17.*

† This is the last time that we have any mention of our Lord's mother in scripture; and as to those that are here called his brethren, (see the note on *Matt. xii. 46.*) they are now reckoned among his disciples, though they formerly did not believe in him, as appears from *John vii. 5.*

in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together with about an hundred and twenty.)

16 Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now, this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and

ty, or six-score persons, all faithful and affectionate disciples of the Lord Jesus, the apostle Peter took occasion to stand up among them, and addressed them, (not as one having authority over them *, but as one that was on a level with them) in the following manner :

16 My dear friends and countrymen, whom I may also call my fellow-servants and disciples, and my brethren in Christ ; I have an affair of vast importance to propose to you : Ye all know what has befallen one of our number, but it ought not to surprise or humble you ; for as *the counsel of the Lord stands for ever*, (Psal. xxxiii. 11.) and as this melancholy circumstance was foretold in prophecy, and so became characteristic of the Messiah, it was eventually necessary, that the prediction delivered by David, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, (Psal. xli. 9.) should be remarkably fulfilled in the perfidious wickedness of Judas, of whom, as typified by *Achitophel*, it is there said, *Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lift up his heel against me* ; (see the Paraphrase on John xiii. 20.) and who accordingly directed the counsels of the Jews against the Lord Jesus, and conducted those that apprehended him in the garden, in order to their putting him to death. (Luke xxii. 3, 4, 47.)

17 For this Judas was one of our fellow-disciples and associates, one of Christ's domestics, whom he kindly treated, and highly favoured, like an intimate friend, and one whom, of his mere good pleasure, he chose and called to the apostleship, and intrusted with the same important ministry in his kingdom, as he did the rest of us, who have been honoured with that office. (Luke vi. 13,—16.)

18 But this base wretch (*ουτος*) turned traitor to his great and benevolent Lord, whom he sold to the chief-priests, at the price of a slave ; (Mat. xxvi. 15. see the Paraphrase there) and instead of getting any advantage thereby to himself, he was so terrified in his conscience for the detestable crime he had committed,

N O T E.

* *Sitting*, in that age, was a sign of authority in teaching, and was accordingly used by the scribes and Pharisees, and most commonly by our Lord himself, in speaking to the people. Peter therefore did not sit, like one claiming authority over his brethren ; but stood up, as one that treated them with respect, and only made a motion to them, which, perhaps was in pursuance of some of those instructions that Christ gave his apostles about the things pertaining to

the kingdom of God. (ver. 3.) And as men and brethren was a familiar appellation frequently used by equals among the Jews, and by the apostles in their discourses on various occasions : So Peter here addressed the company in this stile, without any marks of authority ; and I do not find that our blessed Lord ever set himself so much on a level with his hearers, as once to use this phrase in any of his speeches to them.

and all his bowels gushed out.

committed, that he returned the money to them, (*Mat. xxvii. 3, 4.*) who * with these wages of unrighteousness bought a field to bury strangers in; (*Mat. xxvii. 7.*) and he, in the horror and despair of his own mind, went and hanged himself, and, something giving way, tumbled headlong from that place with such force, that his belly burst, and let out all his entrails. (See the note on *Mat. xxvii. 5.*)

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem: inasmuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, The field of blood.

19 And this tremendous fact could not be concealed, but was universally known among all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so that the field purchased by this iniquitous money, is commonly called, by way of infamy, in the vulgar Jewish dialect, *Aceldama*, which signifies a field of blood; intimating, that it was bought with that money † which was the price of innocent blood; and this was a righteous judgment of God upon him.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and, His bishoprick let another take.

20 For as he deserved the severest and most exemplary punishment, so he is the person to whom some other expressions pointed, under the type of *David* and his enemies, in the book of *Psalms*, not by way of execration, but of prophecy, (*Psal. lxi. 25.* and *cix. 8.*) *Let his habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in his tents*; and as to the apostolic function, to which he was chosen together with us, *Let another take his office.*

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

21, 22 This plainly leads us to the duty that now lies immediately before us, for supplying the vacancy made by his villany, punishment, and death: Therefore, as the Holy Ghost ordered before, that his office should be filled up by another, and our Lord himself originally designed the number of twelve to be his witnesses, it behoves us to pitch upon some proper person for this purpose, from among the seventy disciples, who have been our companions in attendances on the Lord Jesus, all along from the very time that he began to converse with us, and to preach, and work his wonderful miracles in our presence †; even from the days when *John* baptized

NOTES.

* As *Judas*'s money for which he sold his Lord was laid out for this purpose, he is said to purchase a field with the reward of iniquity, though he did not intend that purchase; as persons are said to get to themselves shame, and to receive damnation to themselves, (*Prov. ix. 7.* and *Rom. xiii. 2.*) though they do not design it.

† But *Dr. Lightfoot* and some others have thought it was called the *Field of blood*, because *Judas* himself expired

there; and so it was stained with his blood that took the price, as well as was bought with the price of blood.

‡ The baptism of *John* may relate either to his beginning to baptize, or to his baptizing our Lord; but I rather take it, with *Grotius* and *Hammond*, to mean *John*'s baptizing Christ, because till then, Jesus did not go in and out among the disciples to exercise his public office, as this phrase sometimes signifies, (*Deut. xxxi. 3.* and *2 Chron. i. 10.*) or to employ himself

zed him at his entrance on his public ministry, unto the day when he was so lately removed from us by his visible ascent to glory ; it is necessary that one of this character, who has been thus intimately acquainted with Christ's life, doctrine, transactions and death, resurrection and ascension to heaven, be appointed to this office, that he may be capable of joining his testimony upon personal knowledge with ours, concerning all that we are to publish relating to our Lord, and particularly to his resurrection from the dead, which is the grand article, and evidence of all the glorious things that we are to testify concerning him ; and the foundation of all our hope in him.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

23 And this motion so thoroughly approved itself to the whole assembly, to whom it was made, (*ver. 15, 16.*) that they immediately agreed to nominate two persons of the above-mentioned qualifications, that should stand as candidates for the choice, or rather should be presented before the Lord for his designation of one of them to that office * : One was *Joseph*, who was also called *Barabas*, and was surnamed *Justus*, and the other *Matthias*.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

24 And as all the rest of the apostles were chosen immediately by the Lord Jesus himself, the whole multitude joined in solemn prayer to him, (see the note on *ver. 14.*) saying, Thou, blessed Lord, who art the great head and ruler of the church, and whose prerogative it is to be intimately and infallibly acquainted with the most secret temper, principles, and views of all men's hearts, about which we may, but thou never canst be deceived ; we humbly beseech thee to favour our design of referring this important affair to thee by lot, that as *the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, (*Prov. xvi. 33.*) so thou wouldst in that way point out to us, which of these two servants of thine thou thyself hast chosen, and designated, to fill up the present vacancy ;

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might

25 That he, by the determination of the lot, may enter upon, and bear his part in, the labour and honour of the apostolic charge, which *Judas* infamously violated, and threw himself out of, by his monstrous wickedness, that he might no longer retain his part therein,

NOTES.

himself in his work among them, as it signifies at other times. (*Deut. xxviii. 6.* and *Psal. cxxi. 8.*)

* It is uncertain who these two men were ; but some think that *Joseph* was the same with that *Jesus*, who is called *Justus*. *Col. iv. 11.* and others think it was *Joseph* the brother of *James* the less, *Mark vi. 3.* and *xv. 40.* and that for his

uprightness and integrity he was surnamed by the Romans, *Justus*, or the *Just*, as *James* himself also was. And as *Matthias* and *Nathaniel* both signify the same thing, namely, *the gift of God* ; it is not improbable but that this might be *Nathaniel*, of whom Christ said, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.* *John i. 47.*

might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

therein, but might go to the place which he justly deserved, and which was, by the righteous judgment of God, properly his own, (*ὡς τῶν τῶν ἰδίων*) and there might receive the due reward of his iniquity*.

26 And prayer being ended, they all in a religious manner, with faith and dependence on the overruling providence of God for the event, delivered their lots †; and as the determining lot fell upon *Matthias*, in answer to their prayers, he from thenceforward was received and regarded, by the common consent and approbation of all the disciples, as a twelfth apostle, of the same rank and dignity with the other eleven; and so they were again restored to their original number, according to the twelve tribes of *Israel*; *Matthias* being made one of them before the approaching miraculous effusion of the Spirit, that he might have that glorious and public seal of his apostleship equally, and together with the rest of his brethren.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What uncontrollable and glorious evidences have we of the resurrection and exaltation of the once crucified Redeemer, that our faith and hope might be in God! He gave great numbers of his disciples such frequent opportunities of seeing, and conversing with him after his death, that they could not possibly mistake him for any other person whatsoever; and they were eye-witnesses of his ascending with a real human body up to heaven. How delightful is the thought of his having carried our nature into that blessed world! Who, that loves him, would wish for his return to a state of humiliation upon earth! Our great concern is, that we may meet him with comfort at his second appearance to judge the quick and the dead; when, as we are assured by the testimony of angels, he will personally come again in the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see him in all his majesty and glory. In the mean while, how carefully should we attend to the duties to which he calls us, in humble dependence on, and waiting for the promised Spirit to assist, own, and comfort us in his way and work! How cautious should we be of indulging a carnal curiosity, or of prying into God's secrets, that do not belong to us; and how religiously should we commit every thing by faith and prayer to him, who searches the heart, and has the unerring and sovereign disposal of all events, though they may be as uncertain as lots to us! And since lots are an appeal to Providence, it becomes us to use them seriously in important cases, that cannot well be determined otherwise,

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* The reader may consult Dr *Hammond* for another sense of this verse, who includes the words, *from which* Judas by transgression fell, in a parenthesis, and refers his own place, not to Judas and his place of punishment, but to *Matthias* and his place of office, to which he succeeded, as his own proper place in the room of Judas, when he was chosen to the apostleship.

† *Gratius's* account of the manner in which this was done seems as probable as any I have met with: They put their lots (says he) into two urns, one of which contained the names of *Joseph* and *Matthias*, and the other a blank, and the

word *apostle*; and in drawing these out of the several urns, the blank came up with the name of *Joseph*, and the lot, on which was written the word *apostle*, came up with the name of *Matthias*; and this being in answer to their prayers, they concluded that *Matthias* was the man whom the Lord had chosen to the apostleship: And some think that the whole company thereupon expressed their approbation by a common suffrage, together with the eleven apostles, according to *Beza's* translation of the words *συγκληρονομήσαντες μετὰ τῶν ἁποστόλων*, *communibus calculis*.

otherwise, and not about trifles in a ludicrous way. God's determinations should always satisfy us; and when by any means he testifies his call and approbation of his servants, we should receive, and own them with affection and full consent.

C H A P. II.

The Holy Ghost is poured out upon the disciples in the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, 1,—4. Notice is taken of this by the multitude that came together, 5,—13. Peter's discourse on this occasion, 14,—36. The happy effects of his sermon in the conversion of three thousand, and their addition to the church, 37,—41. The eminent piety and charity of this new apostolic church, and the tokens of God's owning and blessing them, 42,—47.

TEXT.

AND, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW as Pentecost, so called because it was fifty days complete after the passover, (*Lev. xxiii. 15.*) was one of the three annual feasts on which all the males of *Israel* were obliged to appear before the Lord at *Jerusalem*; (*Exod. xxiii. 17.*) as this feast was kept in commemoration of God's giving the law at mount *Sinai*; and as the first-fruits of the wheat-harvest were then offered to the Lord, in like manner as the first-fruits of the barley-harvest were at the passover, and oil was poured on the two loaves that were for a meat-offering, (*Exod. xxiii. 16. and Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, 16, 17.* compared with *chap. ii. 1.*) and as Pentecost this year fell on the first day of the week*; so this was a proper time for the most solemn publication of the gospel; for pouring out the first-fruits of the Spirit, and gathering in the first-fruits of the Christian church; and for confirming the New Testament-Sabbath, which commenced with Christ's resurrection on the same day of the week, being the fiftieth day, or seven weeks before. (See the note on *John xx. 26.*) Accordingly, when the evening was past, and the morning-light of the first day of this remarkable feast fully appeared, all the hundred and twenty disciples; (*chap. i. 15.*) were assembled together, as with one heart and soul, and † in one room, for the worship of God.

2 And

N O T E S.

* See for an account of this feast, relating to all these and several other particulars, *Lightfoot* on this place. *Ainsworth* on *Exod. xxiii. 16. and Lev. xxiii. 10. and Bedford's Scrip. Chronol. p. 451, 452.*

† Though the words (*ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ*) together, may not always signify in one

room or place, as particularly not in *ver. 44.* (see *Lightfoot* and *Whitby* there) yet this is its most common sense, as in *1 Cor. xi. 20. and xiv. 23.* and here: However, it is not certain whether this were in the upper room, where they assembled before, (*chap. i. 13.*) or in the temple, where they met to celebrate the

1 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

2 And as they were united together in faith, worship, and love, and were waiting, looking and longing for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, there came all on a sudden a mighty noise from heaven, like the sound of an exceeding strong wind rushing forcibly into the room, to awaken their attention, and to intimate the powerful operation of the Spirit, which usually, like the strong wind that passed before *Elizab.* (1 Kings xix. 11.) begins with terror; and the divine gale filled the whole house where they were sitting, as an emblem that the gospel, attended with the Spirit, should scatter the mists and clouds of ignorance, sin, and error, should bear down all before it, and should fill the whole earth.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them:

3 And immediately after this, there was a visible appearance of such bright rays of glory in the place, as formed themselves into the shape of pointed flames, resembling tongues of fire (*serpentes*, see the note on *Mat.* iii. 16.) that were cleft toward the tip; and the Spirit of God abode, in this surprising form, for some time on the head * of every one of them. By all which it was signified, that they should be miraculously enabled to preach the gospel, with light and fervour, in divers tongues among *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; that the obstructions to the true knowledge of God, occasioned by the confusion of languages at *Babel*, (*Gen.* xi. 9.) should be removed; that the apostles gifts for propagating the gospel should be permanent

N O T E S.

the festival; but considering that the great multitude, which soon after came together, were more than their room can be thought to have held, it seems to have been in the temple, where we find them afterwards, *ver.* 46. and the multitude *saw* the appearance of cloven tongues resting upon them, as well as heard them speak different languages. (*ver.* 33.)

* It is highly probable that this appearance of cloven tongues rested on the heads, not only of the apostles, but of all the hundred and twenty; for it was on their heads, of whom it was said, (*ver.* 1.) that they were all with one accord in one place, which exactly answers to what was said of the whole company, inclusive of *Mary* and the other women; (*chap.* i. 14, 15.) and *Peter* afterwards in this chapter, *ver.* 16, 17, 18. expressly speaks of this as an accomplishment of *Joel's* prophecy, about God's pouring out his spirit on his sons and daughters, and on his servants and hand-maidens: And as those that were

afterwards recommended by the apostles, to be chosen to the office of deacons, are described as men full of the Holy Ghost; (*chap.* vi. 3.) so it seems that the seventy disciples, and others of this company, who were afterwards evangelists, pastors, and teachers, were at this time filled with gifts, in their measure and proportion proper for their work, as the apostles were for theirs; since furnishing out gifts for all these offices, is spoken of as the immediate fruit of Christ's ascension to heaven. (*Eph.* iv. 8, 11.) And that this was the opinion of the ancients, appears from *Jerom.*, *Chrysostom.*, and *Oecumenius.* (See *Whitby* on the place.) But if, as *Dr Leland* observes, the all that were with one accord in one place, *ver.* 1. may refer only to the apostles that had been mentioned just before, (*chap.* i. 26.) there is no necessity of supposing that the Holy Ghost fell in this miraculous manner, at this time, on any more than the twelve apostles. See his *Divine Authority of the Old and New Testament*, Vol. II. p. 313.

permanent and various ; that all their diversities were one, in their design of proclaiming the doctrine of Christ, and were from one original, as proceeding from the same spirit ; and that his operation in them, and by their means, should enlighten and soften, melt and purify the heart, and kindle it into a sacred flame of love, zeal, and holy joy.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

4 Hereupon, answerable to the meaning of these figurative representations, all this company, though, illiterate persons, were in an extraordinary manner filled with the gifts, as well as graces of the Spirit, who is holiness itself, and the author of all holiness in us ; and under his powerful influence they began (*αὐτοψύχως*) to speak the great things of God, with surprising fluency and propriety in foreign languages, which they were before entirely unacquainted with, as the all-knowing Spirit enabled them, by suggesting matter, words, and pronunciation to them.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

5 And this was a proper time, chosen by the wisdom of God, for notifying and proving the truth of this surprising miracle, and making it subservient to the immediate spreading of the gospel ; for as the feast of Pentecost, so the general expectation of the Messiah in those days, had brought vast multitudes of Jews by birth, and by proselytism, (*ver. 10.*) to take up their residence for a longer or shorter time at Jerusalem, religious men that feared God, (*υδαῖς*) who came from all nations, where the Jews were scattered abroad, through the known parts of the world.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

6 Accordingly as soon as this wonderful effusion of the Spirit, in its sensible tokens and effects upon the disciples, alarmed the neighbourhood by * its noise, and by the rumour that they heard of it, a great company of strangers from several countries crowded about the place, and, upon coming thither, were exceedingly surprised, and at a loss what to think ; for every one of them heard some or other of the apostles speaking the various languages of their own respective countries, not by their ears being struck with different sounds of the same words, which would have been a miracle in the hearing, and not in the speaking ; but by the same, or different persons speaking, first to some in one language, and then to others in another, according to Christ's promise, (*Mark xvi. 17.*) that *they should speak with new tongues*, as they now did. (*ver. 4.*)

7 And

NOTE

* *Τὸ ἡρῶδες τὸ φωνὴ ταύτης, this voice, or noise being made*, may possibly refer to the noise that was made by the rushing of the mighty wind ; (*ver. 2.*) and

so may relate to the alarm which was given by that, as well as to the reports which were immediately spread abroad.

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Bold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

7 And all these foreigners, that understood one or other of the several languages they heard, (*ἑταίροι*) were excessively astonished, wondering how this could be, whence it was, and what might be its tendency, design, and issue; and said one to another, What an amazing thing is this! Are not all these speakers illiterate and unpolished *Galileans*, who never learned any other than their own mother tongue?

8 How surprising is it then, that every one of us hears them talking with all readiness, and propriety of words and accept, in the various languages, and dialects of our own countries, (*τὰ ἰδία διαλέκτου*) as if they themselves had been born and bred there!

9, 10, 11 Here are amongst us, persons of no less than fifteen different languages that are spoke, some in *Europe*, others in *Asia*, and others in *Africa*, viz. *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Persians* or *Elamites*, and inhabitants (*κατακλιμένοι*) of *Mesopotamia*, and of *Judea*, who speak a different dialect from the *Galileans*, and of *Cappadocia*, as also of *Pontus*, and of a particular district * belonging to *Asia* the less; of *Phrygia*, and *Pamphylia*, of *Egypt*, and of those quarters of *Lybia*, that lie near *Cyrene*; and together with these, here are sojourning with us (*συνδημῶντες*) both native *Jews*, and religious proselytes, that ordinarily reside at *Rome*; as likewise persons of the island of *Crete*, and the country of *Arabia*; and though our languages are so very different one from another, we all, in our turns, hear these illiterate *Galileans* speaking them severally, as intelligibly, and distinctly, as if they were thorough masters of them all, and uttering in them the praises of God, and the stupendously † great and glorious things which he has done. (*μνησθέντες τοῦ Θεοῦ*)

12 And considering all these circumstances together, the generality of them were in the utmost astonishment, as apprehending that the hand of God must be in this event; and that some very extraordinary state of things was ushering in among them: And as their notions were all confused, and they could not imagine what it should be, they talked one to another in a way of inquiry and surprise, saying, What is God about to do amongst us? Is he introducing the Messiah's kingdom, which we have been looking for,

D 2

by

NOTES.

* As several of these places were in the lesser *Asia*, it must be that part of it which was called the Proconsular, or proper *Asia*, that is here distinguished from them.

† These wonderful things were probably what related to the miracles, death,

resurrection, and ascension of Christ, together with the effusion of the Spirit, as a fulfilment of his promises, and the glorious dispensations of gospel grace; and we may well suppose that the apostles discoursed of these things with abundance of joy and praise.

13 Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken

by these wonderful men? and if so, What sort of kingdom is it likely to be?

13 At the same time there were others, * who were natives of *Judea*, that turned this solemn appearance into ridicule and banter; they themselves being enemies to Jesus and his followers, and not understanding any of these languages besides their own, gave out to the people, more maliciously than ignorantly, that these were only a parcel of drunken louts, who fancied themselves to be inspired, and so talked an unintelligible, nonsensical gibberish, without any meaning, they having intoxicated themselves with the sweet wine, (*γλυκὺς μυστάρωνος*) which they had drank too freely at that festival time.

14 But as this was such an invidious reproach on the apostles, and on the Spirit of God in them, Peter got up, to shew that he was not drunk, as did the other eleven apostles for the same purpose, as also to testify their concurrence with him, and in their turns to confute this calumny †; and he, as their mouth, spake aloud, and with great earnestness, especially to those scoffers, saying, (*αὐτοὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*). Ye *Jewish* men, and all ye inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, I am going to declare a matter of the utmost consequence to you, and beg that you would carefully observe my words of truth and soberness.

15 For neither I nor any of these my companions and brethren are overcome, or any way disordered with liquor, according to the injurious construction that ye have scoffingly put upon our conduct; and it is extremely irrational, as well as uncharitable and prophane, to suggest or imagine any such thing concerning us; for it is now but nine o'clock, the hour appointed for the morning sacrifice, till which time ye very well know that the *Jews* do not use to eat or drink any thing, especially on Sabbaths and solemn festivals ‡; and therefore it cannot be thought that such a great number of us should, with one consent, debauch ourselves so early, and come in so shameful a manner to the worship of God.

16 But what ye have seen and heard is far from being the frolics and senseless jargon of drunkards, as all these strangers can testify, who heard and understood

NOTES.

* These appear to have been some of the natives of *Judea* and inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, who understood only the dialect of that country, by the apostle's directing his speech immediately to them in the next verse; and it is highly probable, that the scribes and Pharisees, who had maliciously charged our Lord,

as casting out devils by *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils, (*Matth. xii. 24.*) stirred up the people to charge this wonderful operation of the Spirit, as the babbling androdomontado of drunken men.

† See *Lightfoot* on the place.

‡ See *Whitby* and *Lightfoot* on the place.

spoken by the prophet Joel;

to signify that the

same thing is

17 And it shall

come to pass in the

last days, (saith

God,) I will pour

out of my Spirit

upon all flesh: and

your sons and your

daughters shall

prophecy, and your

young men shall

see visions, and your

old men shall dream

dreams:

18 And on my

servants, and on

my handmaidens,

I will pour out in

those days of my

Spirit; and they

shall prophecy:

19 And I will

shew wonders in

heaven above, and

signs in the earth

beneath; blood,

and

flood: us as speaking with propriety and good connection, the wonderful things of God, in their own languages, (*ver. 11.*) it, on the contrary, (to tell you the plain truth of the case) is a direct and glorious specimen of the accomplishment of *Joel's* prophecy, (*Chap. ii. 28.—32.*)

17, 18 Where God says in a way of absolute promise, to engage our faith and expectation of a performance; In the last dispensation of grace, in the Messiah's days, which will be a little before the final dissolution of the *Jewish* state, temple, and nation, I will assuredly pour out the gifts and graces of my Spirit, in a more plentiful and extraordinary manner than ever before; not merely upon people of superior character, nor only in the land of *Israel*, but with extensive and abundant light and influence upon persons of all ranks, ages, and sexes, and of all nations, for the advancement of his kingdom and glory in the salvation of many souls; inasmuch, that without distinction of sex, your sons and daughters shall, under immediate inspiration, foretell things to come, and speak unto men for edification, and exhortation, and comfort: (*1 Cor. xiv. 3.*) Without distinction of ages, your young men shall have visions, and your old men dreams, one as well as the other receiving divine revelations, as immediately and evidently from God, as he formerly used to convey them in those ways: And without distinction of outward circumstances and stations in the world, I will shed forth this abundance of the Spirit, in these happy days, on such of my people as are male and female, servants of the lowest rank, as well as on men and women of higher degree and station; and they shall, under a divine afflatus, predict some things, and explain others.

19, 20 And for the utter confusion of my obstinate enemies, that will not be convinced by the plainest manifestations of the Spirit to attest the Messiah's authority and glory, I will cause the most astonishing prodigies in the air above, and terrible prefaces

N O T E.

* It is manifest that *all flesh* must be here taken in a very limited sense, as signifying only some of mankind in all nations; or, more directly and immediately, some of all sorts and degrees of persons, as they are specified in this and the following verse, and were, in fact, partakers of this remarkable effusion of the Spirit, as a pledge of further communications to persons of all the same characters under the gospel-state, in opposition to the *Jewish* notion, which restrained the spi-

rit of prophecy to the *Israelites*, to them that dwell in *Judea*, and to the wise, valiant, and rich, &c. (See *Pocock* on *Joel* ii. 28.) But whatsoever view it had to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, it is plain from *Acts* x. xi. chap. that *Peter* did not understand it in that sense till many years afterwards; and he speaks of what was now done, as an accomplishment of this prophecy, though there were no *Gentiles* among them on whom the Spirit was poured down.

and fire, and vapour of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

on the earth below, such as a vast effusion of blood by the slaughter that shall be made upon the Jews in domestic and foreign wars, and conflagrations of towns and cities, set on fire by invading enemies; and such thick clouds of smoke ascending from thence, as will obscure the light of the sun, and give a dusky red cast to the moon, like the colour of blood *. With all these, and many other frightful appearances, will I introduce that great and signal day of the Messiah's glory, (*crispam*) and of his terrible vengeance on the unbelieving Jews, which shall complete the destruction of their city, temple, and nation, and entirely dissolve their civil and ecclesiastical government, and will be the most awful type and emblem that ever was known of that day of the Lord Jesus; which will be still more terrible to all the wicked and ungodly, at his final appearing to judge the world.

21 But amidst all these terrors and dangers, whoever, despairing of help elsewhere, shall religiously own and cleave to the Lord Jesus, as the only Saviour, and with faith, humility, and fervour, shall pray to him †, and to the Father through him, for all needful guidance, protection, and favour, shall be delivered from the dreadful calamities that will fall on all the impenitent and unbelieving, at the destruction of

N O T E S.

* These expressions may be considered in a metaphorical sense, to signify not only the destruction of cities and towns, but also of rulers and people, and of the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews: But besides the account that *Jesephus* gives of the dreadful havock made upon the Jews by fire and sword, he tells us of many other stupendous prodigies in the air, and on the earth: In the air, he says, a star hung over the city like a sword, and a comet appeared for the space of a year; and when the people were assembled together at the passover, a light shone for half an hour round about the altar and the temple, at the ninth hour of the night, as if it had been noon day; and soon after that festival, chariots of war appeared aloft in the air, and armed troops made swift marches along the clouds all over the country, and seemed to draw lines of circumvallation round about cities. On the earth, he says, at the fore-mentioned passover, a cow, as a priest was leading it to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple; and the eastern gate of the inner temple, which was of brass, and of so immense a weight, that twenty men could hardly shut it, seemed of its own accord to open

about the sixth hour; and at the feast of Pentecost, when the priests, according to custom, went to minister in the temple, they first heard a motion and noise, and then a voice, as it were of a great multitude, saying, *Let us go hence*. And one *Jesus*, the son of *Ananus*, a mean countryman, went about all the city, night and day, crying, *Wo to Jerusalem*, and wo to the temple, &c. and could not be restrained by scourging, and other cruel usage, but finished his warnings at last, saying, *Wo to me also*; at which he was smote by a stone from a sling, and immediately died. *Vid. Hudf. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. cap. 5. p. 128, &c.*

† Calling upon the name of the Lord, is often used with a reference to Christ, and is characteristic of true Christians; see *chap. ix. 14, 21. and xxii. 16. Rom. x. 12. and 1 Cor. i. 2.* and as in the preceding verse, the great and notable day of the Lord is plainly meant of the day of Christ's appearing for the most glorious and awful purposes, the connection leads us to understand this verse, as directing us to call upon his name, and so shews that he is the great Jehovah spoken of in the prophecy, which is here applied to him.

of *Jerusalem* here, and at the day of judgment hereafter; and shall be partakers of that salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

21 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

22 And now, O ye *Israelites*, to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, (*Rom. ix. 4.*) I beseech you attend seriously to the surprising and important things that I have further to say to you under the inspiration of this Spirit, which is now so visibly and remarkably shed down upon us: Ye have heard much of that famous man, whom, though commonly called by way of reproach, Jesus of *Nazareth*, we glory in; and who was signalized among you, and evidently shewn to be from God (*αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ἀποδείκνυσθαι*) and in high favour with him*, by the mighty works, wonders, and signs, all contrary to the course, and above the power of nature, which God the Father, concurring with him, performed by him, in the midst of yourselves, in your own cities, towns, and public assemblies, and before your own eyes, as ye all very well know to be matter of fact, and cannot justly deny.

23 Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

23 This great and glorious Person being by the eternal decree, or settled counsel, and unerring foreknowledge of the infinitely wise and holy God, judicially devoted to death, and providentially put into your hands, that he might fall a sacrifice to the honour and satisfaction of divine justice, and make way for mercy and grace to be extended to the sinful sons of men; so perverse were your hearts, which God foreknew they would be, and determined to leave to themselves without restraint, that ye with horrible malice, rage, and envy, and with stupid blindness and fool-hardiness, seized, and cried out as with one voice against him; and condemned and bound him like a criminal, by a national act in your general council; and, by a monstrously wicked management, procured his being crucified, and put to the most painful and ignominious death, by the hands of *Gentile* sinners (*διὰ χαιρῶν ἀνθρώπων*).

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should

24 This very Person, for promoting the most glorious purposes, contrary to all your expectations and designs, God has still further owned, and honoured, by raising him from the dead; he having judicially released him from all the pains and sorrows of death that were penally inflicted upon him, and thereby taken

N O T E.

* Miracles, wonders, and signs, are terms of like import, and are heaped together to signify the greatness of Christ's miracles, and to raise our admiration at them, and carry our thoughts beyond

them, as they were signs of the divine power and goodness, and of Christ's being approved of God: as the very person he professed to be in his working them. (See the note on *Matth. xiii. 28.*)

should be holden ken away its sting from all that believe in him: He of it, *has thus taken him from prison and from judgment; (Isa. liii. 8.)* because it was utterly inconsistent with the infinite dignity of his person, the perfection of his atonement, the justice of God, and the truth of ancient prophecies, and absolutely impossible, in the nature of things, that he should remain, either by right or force, under the power and penalty of death, or should be held in prison, and not rise a triumphant conqueror over that last enemy, and over him who had the power of death, that is, the devil: (*Heb. iii. 14.*)

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face: for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

25 For the royal and inspired *Psalmist*, personating Christ, who he foresaw would descend from him, according to the flesh, and would be exalted on a spiritual and heavenly throne, which was prefigured by his own temporal throne in *Israel*, expressed himself in the following manner, (*Psal. xvi. 8, 11.*) I have ever had the Lord in my view, thinking and acting as in his sight and presence, and having his glory at heart as my highest end; for he is ever near me; and my utmost confidence is in his wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness; that he will stand by me, and never suffer me to be confounded; (*Isa. l. 7, 8.*) and that I shall never be discouraged in, or beat off from my great undertaking for his praise, and the salvation of his people.

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.

26, 27 Therefore I rejoiced in spirit, and my tongue, which is the glory of a man, especially when employed in the praises of the Lord, could not forbear expressing the gladness of my heart: (*Luke x. 21.*) Yea, in the day of my greatest distress, and in the very article of death itself, I shall still maintain an entire satisfaction, that my body (*κατακλινομαι*) shall be housed in the grave with safety and peace; and that I shall lay it down with sweet composure, as being fully assured, that (*ετι*) thou, O my heavenly Father, wilt not leave my * soul, like other men's, to continue (*υς ανης*) in the invisible state of separation from the body; nor wilt thou permit the body itself of thy Son, whose nature is holy, and who is set apart, and consecrated by his own blood, to the work of redemption, to be so long deprived of life, and of its dear companion the soul, as to begin to turn to rottenness and corruption; but that as those parts of any sacrifice, which were to be eaten, were not to be kept till the third day, lest they should begin

N O T E.

* If as some critics contend, the words *ψυχη* and *ανη* were here to be rendered *life*, and the *grave*, the beauty of the antithesis between Christ's *soul* and his *flesh* or *body* would be lost; and to me it is scarce good sense to say, *Thou wilt not leave my life in the grave.*

begin to putrify*, *Lev. vii. 15.—17.* so I shall rise again on the third day, as one that *offered himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God.* (*Eph. v. 2.*)

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

28 I have an absolute dependence upon thee for this; for thou hast thoroughly acquainted me, as the Head of the Church, with the way in which I, and they in their order, through faith in me, shall arrive at a glorious immortality, and in which thou wilt bring me and them to it, even by raising me from the dead, *as the first-fruits of them that sleep* in their graves: (*1 Cor. xv. 20.*) And as thou wilt smile upon the whole of my undertaking and performances; so, when I am risen, thou wilt *give me glory, that their faith and hope may be in thee*; (*1 Pet. i. 21.*) and wilt receive me, and them after me, to all unutterable delights in thy immediate presence, where is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.

29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day:

29 Now, ye men of *Israel*, my countrymen, and kinsmen after the flesh, permit me to discourse a little, with openness and freedom upon this prophetic passage of scripture; consider it calmly as reasonable creatures; and do not be prejudiced against what I am going to say about it, with all the good-will and friendship of a brother to you: Ye all know that the renowned and pious *David*, who may well be called a *patriarch*, as he was the head of the royal family, died and was buried above a thousand years ago; and, by consequence, his soul has been all this time in a separate state, and his body has long since corrupted and turned to dust in the tomb, which, in honour to his memory, has been kept up, and continues amongst us, to this very day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:

30 The fact therefore shews that he could not say these things concerning himself; but being an inspired prophet, and knowing that God had given him a gracious promise, and confirmed it irrevocably with an oath, that, when he himself should sleep with his fathers in the dust, he would set up his seed after him, which should proceed out of his bowels, (see the note on *John i. 14.*) and would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever; (*2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.* and *Psal. cxxxii. 11.*) and knowing, by the spirit of prophecy, that this related to, and would have its full accomplishment in the Messiah, who should descend from him in his human nature, and in a high and glorious sense should inherit his throne in *Israel*:

31 *David,*

NOTE.

* To see corruption, is an *Hebraism* for corrupting. See *Ainsw.* on *Lev. vii. 17.*

31 He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

33 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

31 *David*, I say, foreseeing this, spake, in the place but now mentioned, concerning the resurrection of the Messiah after he should be put to death; and personating him said, that his soul was not left for any length of time in a separate state, nor did his flesh continue so long in the grave, as to be in any degree putrified; God taking care, by his special providence, to preserve it from corrupting, that it might the more evidently appear to be the same body which was crucified, and that nothing like the common corruption which came upon the human body, by means of the fall, might be found in him.

32 Accordingly this Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom ye lately crucified, is the very person of whom *David* spoke, as of his royal descendant; and whom God, in accomplishment of that prophecy, has raised again from the dead on the third day, before his embalmed body had time to be corrupted: And of this resurrection every one of us, on whom the Spirit has now so visibly descended to confirm our testimony, were eye-witnesses; we all having been well acquainted with him before his death, and having seen him and conversed with him, and several of us having eat and drank with him at various times, for forty days together after his resurrection, till in our sight he ascended up to heaven. (*Chap. i. 3—9. and x. 41.*)

33 So that this very Person is now exalted to his throne, by a glorious operation and display of the divine power, and to a state of the highest dignity and authority in the Father's immediate presence, as head over all things to the church; and he having now, as Mediator, received a full commission from his Father to communicate the Holy Ghost, which there were promises of before-hand by the Father, as well as by himself. (See the Paraphrase on *chap. i. 4.*) He has now, in performance of this grand, comprehensive promise of the New Testament, shed down the Spirit abundantly upon us, for producing those wonderful effects which ye at this very time are eye and ear-witnesses of, and are so much surprised at, and at a loss about. (*ver. 7, 8.*)

34, 35 And even this was likewise foretold by *David*, under the spirit of prophecy, in words that could not personally relate to himself: For that great and excellent prince, how eminent and holy soever he were, is not corporally ascended or gone up to heaven; his body being still in the grave, as has been observed: (*ver. 29.*) But he himself, in a prophecy of the Messiah, brought in God the Father as speaking in this manner to his Son, (*Psal. cx. 1.*) The Lord Jehovah said unto the Messiah, who in his di-

vine nature and office-capacity is my Lord and King, Be thou exalted in the highest majesty and dominion in heaven, for the administration of all the affairs of the kingdom of providence and grace; and continue reigning in all thy power and glory there, till I shall have given thee, as my King, whom I have set on my holy hill of Zion, a complete triumph over sin and Satan, the world and death, and shall have brought all thine enemies into an absolute subjection to thee; that those of them, who are not made willing in the day of thy power, (*Psal.* cx. 3.) may be broken to pieces, as with a rod of iron, (*Psal.* ii. 9.) and trampled under thy feet*: Such an absolute and universal dominion and conquest as this, is no way applicable to *David* himself; but is, in the fullest sense, true of the *Messiah*, whom here he called his Lord.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

36 Therefore, to conclude the whole with an application to yourselves, Since Jesus has wrought such wonderful works, has rose again from the dead, is ascended up to heaven, and has poured down the promised Spirit, and all this in accomplishment of so many ancient prophecies; every *Israelite* among you, upon this concurring evidence, may, and ought to be thoroughly convinced of this important and concerning truth, and we have now full authority to declare it, viz. that God the Father has actually glorified that very Jesus of *Nazareth* whom ye shamefully crucified a few weeks ago, and has vested him with all power in heaven and earth, as *Messiah the Prince*, (*Dan.* ix. 25.) or as the Lord and King, and anointed Saviour of the church.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

37 Upon *Peter's* delivering this scriptural, close, and moving discourse, the Holy Spirit set it home with such power upon the hearts of many of the *Jews*, who heard it, and had been concerned in crucifying the Lord of glory, that they were exceedingly struck, pierced, and wounded in their consciences, under an affecting sense of the greatness of their sin, and of the danger they had exposed themselves to thereby; and cried out with much earnestness and distress of soul, some to *Peter*, and others to the rest of the apostles; Since you have been pleased to call us men and brethren, we beseech you, by all the humanity and kind-

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nels

NOTE

* Here are two allusions to ancient customs; one to the highest honour that used to be shewn to persons, by placing them on the right hand, as *Solomon* did his mother *Bathsheba*, when sitting on the throne; (*1 Kings* ii. 19.) and the o-

ther, to the custom of conquerors, who used to tread on the necks of their vanquished enemies, as a token of their entire victory and triumph over them. See *Job.* x. 24, 25. *2 Sam.* xxii. 39,—43. *Psal.* xviii. 37,—42. and *Ezek.* xxi. 29.

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

nels of such friendly appellations, tell us what is to be done in our deplorable case; what will become of us? Is there any hope of mercy for such provoking wretches, and horrid murderers as we are? If so, what course must we take for the remission of our sins, and escaping their dreadful and deserved consequences?

38 *Peter*, being the most forward speaker of all the apostles, replied, Your case is far from being desperate, though very dangerous: As our great Lord commanded you to repent, upon the encouragements of gospel-grace; (see the note on *Matth. iii. 2.*) so our commission is, to preach repentance and remission of sins, even to you at *Jerusalem*, in his name: (*Luke xxiv. 47.*) Let every one of you therefore be deeply humbled for, and heartily renounce this, and all your other iniquities, with the utmost abhorrence of yourselves; and, as a token thereof, and of your sincere and professed subjection to Christ's authority and grace, and of your accepting him in all his offices, as the only true Messiah, be ye baptized * in his name, that ye may receive the pardon of all your sins, through faith in his atoning blood, which ye so lately shed; and ye, together with that blessing, shall be partakers of the saving influences; and, many of you, of some miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost †.

39

N O T E S.

* As the *Jesus* already believed in God the Father, and in the Holy Ghost, as speaking in and by the prophets, some suppose that they were to be baptized in the name of Jesus, in testimony of their believing him to be a Divine Person, and the true Messiah, which was the grand point to be gained upon them; but that, as the great question among the *Gentiles* was about the true God, they were to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the one true God, in opposition to all idols, according to Christ's commission relating to the *Gentiles*. (*Matth. xxviii. 19.*) But as this ordinance was administered by the authority and command of Christ, and on the foot of faith in him, and obedience to him, as a Divine Person, and the only true Messiah; it is usually expressed by baptizing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jesus*, in the name of Christ, and into him; and this supposes that it was administered according to his express institution, which was, that it should be not in his own name only, but in the name of the Father, and the Holy Ghost, together with his own: And therefore I take baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus, to be expres-

sive, not of the form of baptism, but of the special regard that was had to Christ in it; and, as *Irenaeus* observes, in the name of Christ is understood, the Father, who anointed him, and the Son, who was anointed, and the Spirit, who was the unction with which he was anointed. *Iren. advers. Hæres. lib. iii. cap. 10.* The Scholiasts on this passage also tell us, that *Ambrose* (*de Spir. Sancto lib. i. cap. 3.*) says the same thing, almost in the same words.

† It does not appear to me, that, as some have contended, all that believed and were baptized, had one or other of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, or any thing farther than what was necessary to their own salvation and edification, or than Christians now in days may warrantably hope for. And therefore I take the meaning of this passage to be, not that every individual of them should receive miraculous gifts; but that many of them should, and that all of them should have the Spirit, at least in his ordinary operations; for there is no notice taken of any visible descent, or miraculous effect of the Spirit, on the five thousand that were at this time converted: And though probably many of

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

39 In this way, ye may warrantably hope for this blessing, and ought to put in for it, as ever ye would be concerned for your own, and your dear offspring's happiness: For the promise of God's covenant, (*Gen. xvii. 7.*) of which baptism is now to be the sign and seal, as circumcision has been heretofore, and particularly the promise of the Spirit, (*Isa. xlv. 3.* and *lix. 21.*) runs to you and your children: And as the blessing of *Abraham* is, under this new dispensation, not to be confined, as formerly, to the *Jews*, but is to come on the *Gentiles* also, who are at present far from God, and from his covenant, (*Eph. ii. 12, 13.*) even on as many of them as the Lord, our covenant-God shall graciously call to the faith and fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, by the gospel*; the same promise is to them and their children, to be fulfilled in its proper season; they being thereby to be made the children of *Abraham*, and to be blessed with him, and so become the children of promise, even as *Isaac* was. (*Gal. iii. 7, 9, 16, 17, 27, 28, 29.* and *iv. 28.*)

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this

40 The apostle enlarged upon these things, adding many other particulars of like tendency, by which he bore witness to Christ's resurrection and exaltation, and exhorted them to embrace him as the true Messiah, saying, Let such considerations as these move

NOTES.

these were present at a following assembly, when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary manner; (*chap. iv. 31.*) yet as the apostles afterwards spoke to the church, (*chap. vi. 3.*) of chusing such men for deacons from among themselves, as were full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, they thereby intimated that all the disciples were not so.

* It seems too narrow to confine the promise here mentioned, to that in *Joel ii.* which *Peter* had referred to, *ver. 16, 17, 18.* For he there speaks of that promise as then accomplished in the effusion of the Spirit only on *Jews*; and though he there leads our thoughts to the tenour of God's covenant, relating to his people's seed, together with themselves, as his spirit should be poured out on their sons and daughters, under the gospel-dispensation, in which there is neither male nor female, but they are all one in Christ Jesus; (*Gal. iii. 28.*) yet the promise here seems to look still further, to the grand promise that God made to *Abraham*, and his seed in their several generations, and afterwards renewed, through the Old Testament dispensation, to *Israel* and their seed; and so intimates, that the

gospel-dispensation would be so far from repealing this promise, that it should be established, and take effect, even among believing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*: And it is most natural to understand this promise, as belonging in both its branches to believing *Gentiles*: For the same promise is said to be to them, as was to the *Jews*; and it can scarcely be thought, that when *Gentiles* came to be converted and incorporated into the same Christian body, and particular churches, as many of them were with the *Jews*, the *Jewish* members should have a right to the promise for their children, and the *Gentile* members should have none for theirs; nor can it easily be reconciled to that community of privileges between them, which the apostle speaks of, *Rom. xi. 16, 17.* I therefore take the sense given in the Paraphrase, to be designed by the Holy Ghost, under whose inspiration *Peter* spoke, though *Peter* himself, like some of the ancient prophets, (*1 Pet. i. 10, 11.*) did not understand the full meaning of what he himself delivered, since he, as yet, had no distinct notion of the calling of the *Gentiles*, as is observed in the note on *ver. 17.*

this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

move you to renounce the obstinacy and infidelity of this perverse generation of men, especially of the scribes and Pharisees, those inveterate enemies to our blessed Lord, and to come out from among them, that ye neither be partakers of their sins, nor of their plagues, in the dreadful vengeance that is coming upon this city and nation, and in the more terrible wrath that shall be poured out upon all the impenitent and unbelieving at the last day.

41 Then, the Spirit of God working with this discourse *, those among them, whose hearts were opened to attend to, and joyfully embrace the glad tidings of mercy, through a crucified and risen Saviour, were, upon their profession of faith and repentance, baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, under those considerations of him: And so great was the number of them, that, notwithstanding the strong prejudices which before had filled their hearts, about three thousand of them were that very day wrought upon, and added to the church of Christ then erected at Jerusalem.

42 And so effectual was the grace of God in them, that they, from that time forward, not only attended with all diligence and constancy on the apostles preaching, but stedfastly persevered in the faith and profession of the doctrine of Christ, which they preached, and in Christian communion with the church, in all offices of brotherly love; and they often joined together † in celebrating the Lord's supper,

N O T E S.

* It is evident by this happy effect, that the effusion of the Spirit, on this memorable day, was for gracious, as well as miraculous operations: For it wrought in this great, and before hardened multitude, unto their conviction of sin, and receiving the word with faith, repentance, and joy; thus the gospel coming to the *Thessalonians* in power, and in the Holy Ghost, wrought in them; (1 *Thess.* i. 5.—10.) and the apostle *Paul* speaks of regeneration, or the renewing of the Holy Ghost, as the effect of the effusion of the Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: (*Tit.* iii. 5. 6.) And to suppose that the pouring out of the Spirit, in this and other places, is to be restrained to his miraculous gifts and operations, is to represent all those passages as of very little use to succeeding generations, any further than as they are attestations to the truth of the gospel; and is to take off all the encouragement we have from them to expect such influences of the Spirit as are necessary to vital religi-

on, or to conversion and edification in the settled state of the church: But surely it is still as true as ever, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, &c. *Rom.* viii. 9, 10, 11. And as to his enlightening, sanctifying, comforting, and saving fruits and assistances, that these are equally necessary in all ages. See among other places, *Rom.* viii. 13.—16, 26. *Gal.* v. 22, &c. *Eph.* i. 17.—20. and ii. 18. and iii. 16.

† Though *breaking of bread* was used to express a common, or a miraculous meal, as well as the Lord's supper; yet as it is here brought in between other exercises of devotion, it seems to be meant of the *Lord's supper*, and to be a different thing from their *breaking of bread from house to house*, mentioned, *ver.* 46. which I think may be best understood of their brotherly familiarity and friendship at their common meals; for it would otherwise appear too much like a needless tautology, in such a short and

per, as the memorial of his death, and in solemn supplication and prayer for further effusions of the Spirit upon themselves and others, that the word of the Lord might run and be glorified.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

43 And so much of God appeared among them, that people of every rank, who had opportunities of observing it, were struck with a solemn awe; so that none, as yet, dared to oppose them: And their souls were the more impressed with a reverence for them, and with fear of what might be the sad consequence of their having crucified Christ, when they saw many other amazing miracles wrought by the apostles, to confirm their testimony, besides that of their so readily speaking various languages, which they had never learned by education or art. (See the note on ver. 22.)

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

44 And such a sincere, disinterested spirit of love and beneficence; such holy contempt of this world, and lively hopes of a better; and such a zealous concern for supporting the interest of Christ, in its infant and exposed state, prevailed amongst all these believers, that they met together as much, and as many of them, as possible, in various companies with one design, for Christian conversation, and acts of social worship; (see the note on ver. 1.) and the urgent circumstances of things calling for it, they made a common stock of their worldly possessions, that the poor might be comfortably provided for, as well as the rich.

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

45 And the more effectually to answer this charitable end, many of the more wealthy of them cheerfully sold their real and personal estates, and distributed the produce of the whole, as occasions required, to all that were necessitous among them*.

46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness

46 They likewise continued, as with one heart and soul, to resort to the temple at the hours of prayer every day, to join with others in public worship; and they tabled together as opportunities and conveniences offered, sometimes at one house, and sometimes at another †; and all this was attended with such

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and general account of their Christian temper and behaviour; and it is brought in, after the historian had spoke of their having all things common among them, ver. 44. 45.

* All men and every man here must be restrained to such members of this Christian society, as believed, and had need of relief. Their having all things common, mentioned in the foregoing verse, must likewise be restrained to the particular effects which had belonged to some

of them; and this gives us a lively view of the Christian spirit, that ought to govern every true believer, though this manner and degree of its exercise was peculiar to the circumstances of those days, and was not designed for the imitation of all after ages.

† Or from house to house (κατ' οἶκον) may signify at the house, meaning where they had met in an upper room, chap. i. 13. But see the note on ver. 42. of this chapter.

gladness and singleness of heart;

such a joyful sense of God's love, and such consciousness of undissembled sincerity, and hearty, glowing affection one to another, as sanctified and sweetened every meal.

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

47 So they went on admiring, adoring, and blessing God for Jesus Christ, and for the riches of his grace manifested to them through him, in the forgiveness of their great and aggravated sins, in the renewings and consolations of the Holy Ghost, in the holy communion they had with God, and with one another, and in their assured hopes of glory. And so many tokens of the divine favour and image appeared upon them, that they were in high esteem with the generality of the people: Yea, the Lord Jesus so eminently owned and blessed their gospel-ministrations, together with their exemplary temper and behaviour, that by these means he continually made still many more converts, and added them to this first New Testament-church, even such as were brought into a saved state, (*τὴν σωτηρίαν*) and should be effectually secured, and carried on to eternal salvation, as well as delivered from the destruction that was coming on *Jerusalem*, and on the body of the obstinate, unbelieving *Jews*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How impossible was it that the divine Saviour, who had satisfied the law and justice, should be detained as a prisoner in the grave! And how glorious are the fruits of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the Father's right hand, in the miraculous effusions of his Spirit on his first disciples, and in his gracious and effectual operations for the conversion of three thousand souls on one day! All this was done to demonstrate that Jesus, whom the *Jews* had crucified, is the true Messiah: to fulfil ancient prophecies in him; and to confirm and propagate the gospel, that the *magnalia Dei*, the great things of God, might be spoken and understood in every language: And as these vast importances were to be dependent upon, and in consequence of, Christ's being put to death by wicked hands, What adoring thoughts should we have of the infinite wisdom and holiness of God, in permitting and over-ruling the wickedness of men, according to his eternal purpose, and leaving the sinner utterly inexcusable, who freely commits the most abominable iniquity of his own accord, and from the malignity of his own heart, without any knowledge of, or design to fulfil, a divine decree! And how concerned should we be to forsake the company and practices of men of corrupt minds, that we may not be involved in their sin and ruin! But, alas! how perverse and obstinate are our hearts in opposing, ridiculing, and reviling, even the plainest, and most glorious manifestations of God's power and goodness, till his Spirit begins to work upon them! Then some are struck with awe and wonder, and laid under restraint; and others are deeply convinced and humbled, like persons pricked at their hearts; are put upon earnest inquiries after salvation; and are brought to repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and to a professed subjection to Christ and his gospel, by being baptized in his name, joining in church-fellowship, and observing all his commands: And, O how wonderful is the grace that pardons the greatest of sins; and the change that is made upon the worst, even upon *Jerusalem*-sinners! What blessing and praising of God, zeal for his glory, and communion with him and his people; what stedfast adherence to the apostles doctrine; what solemnity in religious acts of worship, heavenly-mindedness, contempt of this world, and benevolence to men; and what Christian compassion, and affection to the brethren, does this change produce!—Blessed be God, that our children

dren are brought into the pale of the covenant with ourselves under the gospel-dispensation; and that he will ever own his people, will give them favour in the eyes of others, that behold their good conversation in Christ, and will be continually adding to his church saved ones. O may the blessed Spirit come upon us as a mighty rushing wind, and a penetrating, purifying fire, to fill our assemblies and our souls with light and power, and efficacious influence! And may we be found among them that call upon the name of the Lord, and shall be saved!

C H A P. III.

Peter and John cure a cripple that lay at the gate of the temple, 11.—

11. Peter declares to the people, that this was done not by their own power or holiness, but by faith in the name of Christ, whom they had crucified, 12.—18. And exhorts them to repentance, and to believe in him for the remission of sin, 19.—26.

TEXT.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask

PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to instance in one single miracle wrought by the apostles hands, when vast multitudes were gathered together, (*ver. 9.—11. and chap. iv. 4.*) * Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision, and John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, went up together to the temple to worship, and to take an opportunity of preaching Christ unto the people, at three o'clock, in the afternoon, which was one of the Jews stated hours of prayer.

2 And a certain poor man, who was forty years old, (*chap. iv. 22.*) and had been a cripple from his very birth, and, being unable to walk, was wont to be carried by others, and laid, day after day, as a miserable object of charity, at the east-gate of the temple, which, for its extraordinary splendor, and fine architecture, bore the name † of the beautiful gate:

NOTES.

* Whether this were on the same day of Pentecost, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, or some following day of that solemn feast, or some time afterward, is uncertain: But it seems to have been at one of the Jewish festivals; because, most commonly at other times, few used to attend the temple-worship besides the priests and the stationary men, who represented the whole congregation of Israel; and as the apostles did not yet understand the abolition of the ceremonial part of temple-service, they, as opportunities offered, attended these, together with the moral parts of worship there; but they especially took the advantage of public seasons to go thither, that they might preach to the people. And as there were three stated times, or hours,

of daily prayer among the Jews, one at nine o'clock in the morning, the second at noon, and the last at three in the afternoon, all which were observed by David and Daniel. (*Psal. iv. 17. and Dan. vi. 10, 13.*) The first and last were at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices; (*Exod. xxix. 38, 39. and Numb. xxviii. 3, 4.*) the second is taken notice of as the time when Peter was at prayer on the house-top. *Acts x. 9.* and the last is referred to *Psal. cxli. 2. Dan. ix. 21. and Acts x. 3.*

† Dr Lightfoot tells us from Josephus, that this was the east gate at the front of the wall that encompassed the court, which went by the name of the inner temple, in opposition to the space without the wall, which was called the outward

ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

4 And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, and walk.

gate: Thither he was brought, that, being unable of getting his livelihood by labour, he might ask relief of the religious and well-disposed, as they went to and from the worship of God at that sacred house.

3 This indigent lame man, seeing the apostles Peter and John, as they were entering into the temple, begged of them to give him some small matter for his sustenance.

4 Upon which, both of these compassionate and holy men, instead of turning their eyes another way, as mercilefs people do from the miserable, looked wistly at him, and designing something better for him than a common alms, said, Attend to us, and observe what we have to say and do to you.

5 He, encouraged by this their kind way of accosting him, looked earnestly at them, and listened to their words, in full expectation that their eyes being fixed on him, and his on them, would move their hearts, and that they would generously bestow something upon him, to relieve his necessities.

6 Then Peter, as the most forward spokesman, said to him, You, no doubt, expect money of us; and, were we able, our compassion is so great for you, that we could willingly give you both silver and gold; but, alas! we ourselves are poor men, that have none of that sort of treasure to spare; however, such benefit as my great Lord has freely enabled, and ordered me to communicate, and is much more valuable than the most liberal alms that you look for, I freely bestow upon you; and that you may know by whose warrant I do it, and may believe in him for this, and for still much better blessings, I say unto you in the name *, or by the sole authority and power

NOTES.

ward temple; and as this gate was of Corinthian brass, it was called the Corinthian gate, and far exceeded in glory those of gold or silver. See *Temple service*, ch. xviii. p. 1091. Vol. first of his works.

* How different was the behaviour of the apostles from that of our blessed Lord in working miracles! Though on proper occasions, for asserting and vindicating his office-character, as the Messiah, in human nature, he spoke of himself as coming, and doing his works, in his Father's name; *John* v. 43. and x. 25. yet even at those very times, he, to secure the honour of his superior character as God, spoke of himself as the Son, who acts in full concurrence with his Father, in all that the Father himself doth; and has life in himself, and quickens whom

he will; and said, I and my Father are one, *John* v. 19.—26. and x. 30. And his usual way of performing his miracles themselves, was with the sovereignty and authority of a God, without taking any manner of notice of his Father therein. (See the note on *John* xi. 41.) But the apostles commonly wrought their miracles in *Christ's name*, and with an express reference to him as their principal, and as the fund of all the power by which they were wrought; and absolutely disclaimed every thing in themselves as contributing toward them, any further than as their faith was the appointed means of his conveying the virtue that produced them; (*ver.* 12, 16.) and so these works were wrought by his power when he was corporally absent from our world, as well as when he was present.

power of that very person who has been commonly known and despised under the character of Jesus Christ of *Nazareth*, get up immediately, and walk before all this company, that they may be witnesses of his power in healing you.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lift him up: and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength.

7 At speaking these words, the apostle *Peter*, laying hold on the cripple's right hand, raised him up; and the once crucified but now exalted Saviour, so wonderfully owned faith's resting on him for the cure, that the poor man's feet and ancles, which had been enfeebled and lamed from his very infancy, were instantly restored to their full strength and soundness.

8 And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

8 So that he nimbly sprang up, and had such a perfect use of his legs, that he stood firmly upon them, and then readily walked about (*περιπατει*) before all the company, and went into the inner court of the temple with the apostles, walking and leaping there, with all agility and vigour, like a hart, as was prophesied, (*Isa. xxxv. 6.*) in an ecstasy of admiration and joy, and publicly blessing God, in adorations, thanksgivings and praises, for so great and unexpected a mercy, which nothing short of the divine power and goodness could have conferred upon him.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

9 This was not done in a corner, but the whole multitude saw him walking, and leaping about, all in rapture, and heard him ascribing glory to God, and publishing his praise.

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

10 And being fully satisfied that this was the very man whom they knew to have been born a cripple, and had for a considerable time past, seen daily sitting to ask the charity of the people, as they went in and out at the beautiful gate of the temple, they were exceedingly struck with awful astonishment, and joyful ecstasy, (*ἐκστασι καὶ ἠδυσίᾳ*) at such a remarkable manifestation of power and goodness, and at such a sudden, miraculous, and happy change, that was wrought upon both the body and mind of the man, who had been lame, and used to spend his time and voice in begging.

11 And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together

11 And whilst he, in transports of love and joy, of praise to God, and gratitude to the instruments of his great deliverance, was clinging about the two apostles *Peter* and *John*, as unwilling to let them go, and desirous of hearing them preach still more of

F 2

Christ

NOTE

present in it; and shew it to be such as can be found in none but the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God: And that the apostles believed him to be so, is apparent from their taking no

notice of his Father, but only of Christ himself, as the divine Author of these cures. See Mr. *Hughes's* essay toward some further evidence of our Saviour's divinity, Part II. p. 10, &c.

together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 And when Peter saw *it* he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One, and

Christ to him, vast numbers of people crowded together about them in the spacious porch, which stood in the court of the *Gentiles*, on the same spot of ground where *Solomon* had erected one of great magnificence in the first temple, being full of amazement at what the apostles had done, and at the behaviour of this man, who seemed to idolize them.

12 Then *Peter*, observing the consternation and crowding of the people, and being afraid of robbing Christ of his glory, or taking any honour to himself, said to them, O ye *Israelites*, to whom pertain the covenants, and the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, (*Rom. ix. 4.*) and who are acquainted with the sacred oracles, and have seen many miracles performed of late among you, by our great Lord and Master; why should you be so astonished at this, which has now been wrought, as if it were entirely a new thing? or why should you be so stupid, as to fix your eyes with such earnestness upon us his apostles, or once to imagine, that by any human art, or religious excellencies; or by any sort of ability or worthiness in ourselves, we had restored this man, all on a sudden, to the perfect use of his limbs? (See the note on *ver. 6.*)

13 No, no, it was not from any virtue in us, or in our words; but the true state of the case is this; God, who entered into covenant with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and their seed, even the God of those eminent patriarchs, who were our fathers; he, according to ancient predictions and promises, has not only brought his own Son into this world, even Jesus, to be our Saviour; but has now exalted him in human nature, as the great Messiah, on his throne of glory in the highest heavens, to exercise all power there and on earth, which he has given him under that character: This great and glorious Person is he, whom ye lately, like so many traitors, delivered up, as by a common suffrage, first to the great council, and afterwards, by them, as your representatives, to the *Roman* governor; and when he was arraigned at *Pilate's* bar, ye, with one consent and voice, disowned him for your king, and cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*; and that in opposition to the arguments and entreaties of the governor, who, apprehensive of your envy, and of Christ's innocence, was desirous, and had resolved in himself, if possible, to move your compassion toward him by scourging him, and then prevail with you to let him be discharged.

14 But, instead of being melted and softened by these methods, ye grew more and more enraged, and persisted

and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

persisted in refusing and rejecting him, and in denying yourselves to have any interest in, regard, or value for him, whose nature and works, cause and conduct, were in reality, and evidently appeared to be, all pure and spotless, righteous and unblameable: and so desperately malignant were ye against him, that when *Barabbas* and he were proposed to your choice, for the release of one of them, ye preferred that infamous robber, (*John xviii. 40.*) and murderer; and insisted on that favour's being shewn to him, rather than to the blessed Jesus, whom ye spoke of with the utmost contempt.

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

15 And in this manner ye persecuted this Captain of salvation, till ye procured his death, who has life in himself, and cannot die for ever; and who is so far from being a murderer, that he is the author, revealer, purchaser, and giver of spiritual life to sinners that believe in him, and is their great leader (*ο ἀρχηγός*) in the way, and to the possession of eternal life; to which he will raise them at the last day: But God, his Father, whom he had glorified in his life and death, put a glory upon him, by raising him again, and receiving him up to heaven, and thereby confirming what he had said concerning himself, and taking away the reproach of his sufferings; of all which we were eye-witnesses: And we are now authorized to declare it, having ourselves seen and conversed with him several times after his resurrection, and been present when he ascended up to glory.

16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

16 Now it is by his authority and command, power and merit, through faith in him, as thus exalted after his crucifixion, that this man is all at once healed, whom, though a stranger to us, (*ἄγνωστον ἡμῖν*) ye now see to be so strong as to leap and walk about, and whom ye have formerly known to have been lame from his birth; I say, the faith, (*δι' αὐτοῦ*) which is wrought in us by him, and for his sake, has not of itself, but by his power, on whom we believe, miraculously and perfectly recovered this poor creature from all weakness and pain; and that not in a clandestine method, or by way of charm, but in an open and religious manner, in the presence of you all, that Christ might be glorified among you, and that ye might examine the miracle, and be convinced of it, and might be brought to believe in him for deliverance from all spiritual, as well as temporal maladies, the fruit of sin.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as

17 And though ye have been exceeding criminal in murdering this great and glorious Person, and there is no cloak for your sin; (*John xv. 22.*) yet, that ye may not despair of finding mercy, let me tell you,

as did also your rulers,

you, brethren, that the endearing Saviour himself pleaded for you in the greatness of his compassion, even whilst he hung upon the cross, saying, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do:* (Luke xxiii. 34.) And I am well satisfied, that, through the strength of sinful passions and prejudices against him, on account of the meanness of his parentage and appearance, and the greatness of his sufferings, which were directly contrary to your carnal expectations of a triumphant and reigning Messiah, the generality of you were so blinded, that neither ye of the common people, nor your chief priests and elders of the great council, did really know him to be the true Messiah; otherwise ye would not have dared to crucify the Lord of glory. (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

18 But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

18 But, still further to encourage your hopes of obtaining the forgiveness of this great sin, let me add *, that though ye were ignorant of, and had no thought about fulfilling God's design in what ye did, which leaves you without excuse; yet he has wisely and graciously over-ruled it, for accomplishing the great work of redemption by the Messiah's sufferings unto death, which he had not only determined in his own mind, but had likewise plainly foretold by many of the inspired prophets, as our Saviour himself in person assured some of us, who are his witnesses. (Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 44,—48.)

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

19 Since therefore there is room for mercy, and provision is made for the remission of sins, by that very crucifixion of Jesus which ye were so ignorantly, though wickedly, concerned in; see to it, that now at length, under the present dispensation of the Spirit, by his assistance, and under a sense of the rich mercy and grace of God in Christ, ye be convinced of, and deeply humbled for your horrible iniquity, particularly in murdering him; and that ye turn from your prejudices and opposition against him, to faith in him; and from all your transgressions, to God through him, that your multiplied and aggravated sins, which separate between you and your God, (Isa. lix. 2.) may be *blotted out*, or chased away as a *thick cloud*, by the beams of the Sun of righteousness, (Isa. xliv. 22.) and so may be removed as far from you, as *the east is from the west*, which can never meet together; (Psalm. ciii. 12.) and that, as they are recorded and written as *with a pen of iron* in God's book, (Jer. xvii. 1.) they may be

NOTE.

* *Ye did it through ignorance*, may relate both to their ignorance of Christ, and of God's fulfilling the scripture in their crucifying him; and therefore I have taken both senses into the Paraphrase.

as effectually remitted, as a debt is when the book is crossed, or the bond is cancelled; and so when *they shall be sought for*, to be brought in judgment against you, *they may not be found*; (Jer. l. 20.) but * may be publicly manifested and declared to be forgiven in open court, before angels and men; and all the blessed fruits and effects of that forgiveness may be completely enjoyed, at the final judgment, when Christ *shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*; (2 Thess. i. 10.) and when they shall have days and years of perfect rest and consolation without end, from his person and immediate presence, (*απορουα*) which shall be like a cooling breeze and refreshing shade to them, that have borne the heat and burthen of the day; and like the most delightful and reviving cordial to them, that have been sorely exercised with sins and sorrows, doubts and fears, pains and labours, temptations and troubles of every kind.

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

20 And for this purpose, God the Father will send his Son Jesus Christ the second time for your salvation, who by faith, desire, and hope, look and long for him, (*Heb. ix. 28.*) even that very Jesus, who was fore-appointed to it, † and has been preached in the writings of the ancient prophets, and by his own personal ministry, and the ministry of his disciples before his death, and by us, his apostles, since he rose again and ascended to heaven.

21 Whom the heaven must receive, until the times

21 There he is already received in his human nature †; and there he must abide in possession of heaven, and enthroned in all his glory and dominion, till the

N O T E S.

* *The times of refreshing*, are thought by some to relate to the times of the gospel; and by others to the time of Jerusalem's destruction; both of which were indeed refreshing times to real Christians: But as the time here referred to, is explained in the two next verses, of the time when Christ shall be sent from heaven, where he is to continue till the restitution of all things; I think it must principally, at least, be referred to the time of Christ's coming to judgment; and as the Paraphrase on this verse is already full long, I have given it only in that light. And though God speaks of his having already blotted out the sins of his people; (*Isa. xlv. 22.*) and every true believer is already forgiven all trespasses, and justified from all things; so that there is now no condemnation to him, nor shall he come into condemnation; (*Col. ii. 13. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. viii. 1. and John viii. 24.*) yet as at the day of

judgment all this will be publicly owned, and pronounced in a judicial form, by the Lord Jesus, and all its blessed effects will be perfectly known and enjoyed then, and not before, the sins of believers may be properly enough said to be blotted out then.

† I have here taken in the sense of *αποκαταστασει* before preached, as we have it in our copies, and of *αποκαταστασει* fore appointed, as it is in Stevens's. *Vid. Mill. in Loc.*

† The paraphrase on this verse is formed to include two constructions of the phrase (*ο ουρανους δεξαται*) which may be rendered either *whom the heaven must receive*, or *who must receive heaven*; and to include several senses of the word (*αποκαταστασει*) which may signify the consummation, or finishing, and the accomplishment, as well as the restoration or restitution, of all things. See *Lightf. and Whitby.*

times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

24 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

25 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

26 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

27 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

28 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

29 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

30 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

31 And this must needs be, that all the people shall hear him, and shall be obedient unto the things which he shall say.

the consummation of all things that belong to the gospel-kingdom, which shall issue in a glorious restoration of its subjects, under his influence and government, as Head and King of the church, to a state of perfect holiness and happiness, and in such remarkable alterations of the frame of nature, as may be called *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*; (2 Peter iii. 10,—13.) which things, relating to his kingdom, will be an accomplishment of what God foretold by all the inspired prophets that spake concerning him, from times as ancient as *Enoch* the first prophet, and so onwards since the foundation of the world. (*Jude*, ver. 14, 15.)

22 For, to instance in the most famous of them all, *Moses*, that celebrated law-giver of *Israel*, and typical mediator between God and his people, plainly prophesied of Christ, when he said to our ancestors, (*Deut.* xviii. 15, 18, 19.) *Jehovah*, your covenant-God, will, in his time, set up the greatest of all prophets in the church; who, according to the flesh, shall be a descendent from yourselves, and be sent in the first place unto you of the *Israelitish* nation, and whom he will raise up, (*as was*) as he has me, and like unto me in every distinguished character of my office, though infinitely my superior in all things, as particularly in his intimate acquaintance with God and his counsels, familiar converse with him, and peculiar interest in his love and favour; in his immediate mission from God; in the clearness and divine authority of that new dispensation which he will introduce and establish; in the redeeming of his people from worse than *Egyptian* bondage; in the destruction of his and their implacable enemies; in his leading and conducting them, as their Prince and Ruler, through the wilderness of this world; in his effectually mediating between God and them; in his building a spiritual and living tabernacle for God to dwell in; in his faithfulness, not merely as a servant, but as a son and lord in his own house; and in his confirming all this by such surprising miracles of power and goodness, as none could work, unless God were with him, to own and honour him*. This is by way of eminence, the great Prophet, in whom all your obedience is to center; whom ye are to attend and submit to, with all reverence, faith and love; and whose instructions and commands ye ought heartily

N O T E.

* *Vid. Huet. Demonstrat. Evangel. cy, as relating to the Messiah; and for prop. 7. p. 279. and Bishop Kidder's a resemblance between Moses and Demonstration of the Messiah, Part I. p. Christ.*
30, 31. for a vindication of this proph.

ly and cheerfully to embrace, without exception or reserve, in every thing that he shall deliver to you with his own mouth, or by his servants, whether it be agreeable to your own natural notions and inclination, and secular interests, or not; and some of you shall be brought into a willing subjection to him.

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

23 And the obligation to this is so indispensable, solemn, and awful, that every one who slights and neglects this most eminent prophet, and will not receive him and his doctrine, nor yield obedience to the voice of his word, shall be called to a severe account for it; and shall be excluded from all the blessings of his church on earth, and from the eternal salvation which every true believer shall enjoy in heaven.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

24 Yea, not only *Moses*, but several other prophets that succeeded *Samuel*, who was the first of them that arose with eminent dignity, and that wrote after *Moses*, and in whose days the spirit of prophecy revived, (1 Sam. iii. 1.)* and the schools of the prophets were erected; (1 Sam. xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 2. and vi. 1.) as many as after his time wrote concerning the Messiah, have likewise foretold the things that are now come to pass, and are still hereafter to be fulfilled in his kingdom.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

25 It therefore nearly concerns you, and ye have the highest encouragement to receive the Lord Jesus, in hope of finding mercy through him, notwithstanding your heinous provocations: For ye are the disciples of these prophets, that were your spiritual fathers and your own ancestors, and spoke of him, and were sent of God to deliver promises and prophecies for your benefit, among whom their writings are read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day; (chap. xiii. xxvii.) and ye, as the children of promise, are heirs of the gracious covenant which God made with our fathers and their seed, in their several generations, when he said to *Abraham*, (Gen. xxii. 18. and xxvi. 4.) In one great person, who shall descend from thy loins according to the flesh, shall many, both of thy natural offspring, and of all other nations of the world, be blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings, by their becoming thy spiritual seed, through faith in him. (Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 26,—29.)

26 Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you,

26 Accordingly, that God may fulfil his covenant, he having owned his Son Jesus to be the Messiah, by raising him from the dead, who was also *Abraham's* seed according to the flesh, has sent him in the ministry

NOTE

* See for an account of the schools of the prophets, *Universal History*, from the earliest account of time to the present. Vol. I. Part II. p. 731.

you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities, story of his inspired apostles, who come by his commission, and in his name, that he might make the first overtures of mercy and salvation to you *Jews*; and might render the gospel of his grace effectual in delivering every one of you, that shall believe in him, from the guilt and power of your sins, how great or many soever they be; and so might bless you with all the blessings of eternal life.

RECollections.

Though, under the gospel-state, we are not tied to any particular hour, or place for prayer; yet who can think himself discharged from obligations to observe stated seasons for it, in the morning and evening of every day! And when God draws near to us, in intimations of his mercy, we may expect better blessings than silver or gold, which many, that are rich in faith, may be destitute of. O how glorious is our exalted Saviour; and how securely may we depend on him, and on the divine authority of the apostle's doctrine concerning him; which was preached and was confirmed by miracles, after he was gone to heaven! In him ancient prophecies are fulfilled; through faith in his name, and by the ministrations of his servants, wonderful works have been wrought; and, he can as easily give strength to them that were spiritually, as to them that were corporally impotent from their birth, and enable them to walk with vigour and joy in his ways: To him belongs the glory of all that is done by his servants; and they, that receive the benefit, should shew forth the praises of the Lord: O how wonderful is the wisdom and goodness of God, in over-ruling the ignorance and the wickedness of men, for bringing about the designs of his own glory, and the salvation of his people! How extensive are the pardons, brought in by the great Redeemer, to the vilest of sinners, even to those that betrayed and denied him, and preferred a murderer before him! And what an encouragement is this to the greatest offenders, especially to the children of the covenant, to repent of every sin, and turn to God in hopes of forgiveness, through faith in the Lord Jesus, who is the holy and just One, and the Prince of life; and who, though he was put to death, rose again, and is enthroned in heaven, to exercise all dominion and power, till the whole scheme of his mediatorial kingdom shall be finished at the last day! As ever we hope to share in his blessings, let us look to him, to turn us from all our iniquities, according to the gracious design of God in sending him into the world, to save his people from their sins, and from the wrath to come.

C H A P. IV.

Peter and John are imprisoned by the Jewish rulers, and five thousand are converted, 1,—4. The apostles are brought before the Sanhedrim, 5,—7. Peter makes his defence, and preaches Christ to them, 8,—12. They dismiss him and John, commanding them to preach no more in Christ's name, 13,—22. The apostles and their company betake themselves to prayer, 23,—30. And God honouring them with a fresh effusion of his Spirit, they were knit together in love, and Christ was glorified, 31,—37.

TEXT.

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the

PARAPHRASE.

THE apostles having wrought the fore-mentioned miracle on the lame man, and preached the gospel to a vastly numerous auditory with great success; while they were going on with their discourse to the people

the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

people, for their further instruction and establishment, the priests, who were mostly *Pharisees*, and bitter enemies to Christ and his apostles; and the chief captain*, who had the charge of the temple, and was under their influence; and the *Sadducees*, who denied the resurrection, (see the note on chap. v. 17. and *Mat. iii. 7.*) were enraged at them, and came with violence to seize them.

1 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

2 For the priests were vexed at their assuming an authority of preaching so publicly and boldly, and at their doing it so acceptably to the people; and particularly at their declaring, that the great article of their own faith about the resurrection, was verified in Jesus, (*he who*) whom they had crucified; and that by his power and efficacy all mankind should be raised from the dead at the last day, some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt: And the *Sadducees* were disturbed at their propagating the doctrine of the resurrection itself, with such strong evidence, directly contrary to all the notions of their sect about it.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.

3 Accordingly, instead of rejoicing and glorifying God on account of the illustrious miracle of power and goodness, that had been wrought by the apostles hands, they caused them to be apprehended and clapped into prison, and so to be disgraced, and secured till the morrow; it being too late to examine them, and proceed further against them just then; for it was already evening.

4 Howbeit, many of them, which heard the word, believed: and the number of the men was about five thousand.

4 But, notwithstanding all this contempt and outrage, the Spirit of God wrought so effectually on great multitudes of the hearers, to the number of about five thousand † men, that they believed the apostles doctrine, and received Christ by faith for the remission of their sins.

NOTE.

5, 6 When

* It has been most commonly thought, that this captain of the temple was the commander of the Roman soldiers that kept guard in the tower of *Antonia*, to preserve the peace, especially in times of general concourse; and that his fear of a riot was the cause of his uneasiness on this occasion. But as nothing of this appears from the reasons mentioned, ver. 3, for apprehending the apostles, and as this officer is here called (*ο κρατης*; *ο κρατης*) the captain of the temple, and the Roman commander is usually stiled (*χρηματης*) the chief captain over a thousand soldiers; I rather incline to think, that this might be the chief captain of the several watches which the priests kept in the temple, whom they could easily influence to serve their turn.

(See the note on *Luke xxii. 52.* and *Dr. Lightfoot*, Vol. II. p. 47.)

† The men only that believed are said to be about 5000; and besides these, many women were also probably converted at this time: And I take this 5000 not to be inclusive of the 3000 mentioned chap. ii. 41. but to be entirely new converts; for all along in the third chapter, and in this verse, the people that saw the miracle on the cripple, and heard the apostles discourse on that occasion, are the only persons mentioned; and their believing is spoken of as brought about by those means. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed, when the Spirit was poured out from on high!

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 And, when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this?

8 Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good

5, 6 When the next day came on, the great council of the nation was, without loss of time, called together at Jerusalem, to take this matter into consideration; there were the Jewish rulers, consisting of the chief priests, who were the heads of the twenty-four courses; and the elders of the people, who were the heads of the other tribes; and the doctors of the law, who were mostly of the tribe of Levi; and at their head were Annas, the president of the sanhedrim, who had likewise bore the high priest's office*, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, the present high priest, both of which were concerned in putting Christ to death; (Luke iii. 2.) and together with these were many other noted persons, one named † John, and the other Alexander, and several men of figure, that were akin to the high priest.

7 And when the council, who used to sit in a semicircular form, had ordered the apostles to be placed in the middle before them, they, with a threatening and magisterial air, designing to intimidate, insnare, and confound the apostles, demanded of them, saying, Since we only have a right of authorising public preachers, and ye have had no authority from us; By whose power and commission do ye pretend to preach, and to have cured a cripple, to gain credit to your doctrine? † And whose name did ye make mention of, for obtaining virtue to do it?

8 Then Peter, being under the immediate guidance and extraordinary influence of the Spirit, according to Christ's promise, (Mark xiii. 11.) said to them, (John also concurring) with a respectful freedom and undaunted courage; Being called upon to answer for ourselves by your august and venerable body, O ye chief priests and elders of God's people Israel, we are cheerfully willing to give you all desirable satisfaction.

9 Since we are now brought before you to be examined, as though we were criminals, about the cure

NOTES.

* See the note on Luke iii. 2. In a good agreement with which, we may add Mr Biscoe's thought, who says, and backs it with very probable evidence from Josephus, "The truth of the case is this; Caiaphas had the name of high-priest, but Annas had the authority: Caiaphas was named by the Roman governor, and was the person then in office; but he was wholly under the influence of his father-in-law Annas, who had the chief power and credit with the people." See his sermons at Boyle's lecture, Vol. II. p. 650, &c.

† This John is generally supposed to have been the son of Annas; and Alexander, a man of considerable rank in those days, the same that Josephus speaks of.

‡ Some have thought that they herein referred to the custom of Jewish exorcists, some of which invoked or mentioned Salomon, as others afterwards did the name Jesus, (chap. xix. 13.) for working miraculous cures; and that the meaning of their question was, By mentioning of what name have ye cured this man? as if they had done it by a sort of charm.

good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there

of the poor cripple, the nature of the case speaks for itself, that it was so far from being culpable, as to be really an act of the greatest mercy and goodness: And since ye farther inquire, by what power he is now healed;

10 We readily declare, and solemnly avow to this whole assembly, and make no scruple of publishing it to all the *Jews*, earnestly desiring both you and them to take particular notice of it, as a matter of the utmost consequence, in which every one, from the highest to the lowest, is nearly concerned; and God will make it known, whether ye believe it or not, that, as we before declared to the people, (*chap. iii. 16.*) it is by the authority and power of the great anointed Saviour, whom ye, by way of contempt, called Jesus of *Nazareth*; and whom ye, not long since, crucified; but whom God owned, as his righteous and dear Son, and as the King of *Israel*, by raising him from the dead; it is, we roundly aver, and stand to it, by him, and him only, not by using his name as a charm, but by faith in him, and by virtue derived from him, that this before-impotent man is now restored to the full strength and use of his limbs, and is here standing in your presence, that ye may behold the cure which is wrought upon him, and may ask him what questions ye please, to satisfy yourselves about it.

11 This Jesus, as he himself also intimated, (*Mat. xxi. 42.*) is he, who was spoken of in a prophecy of the Messiah, (*Psal. cxviii. 23.*) under the figure of the stone, which was despised and rejected by you the chief priests and rulers, who, by station and office, ought to be, and who profess to be, the builders of God's living temple, the church; and he is now, by his resurrection from the dead, placed as its foundation, and chief corner-stone, for knitting and supporting all the parts of the spiritual house, which rests entirely upon him.

12 Nor is the spiritual and * eternal salvation, to which

NOTE

* *Peter's* mentioning Christ as the head of the corner, naturally led to the thought of a spiritual and eternal salvation, which it was Christ's principal design to bring in, and with relation to which alone this, and its kindred phrase, the chief corner-stone, is always used by our Lord and his apostles: (See *Luke xx. 17. Eph. ii. 21, 22. and 1 Pet. ii. 6. 7.*) And this spiritual benefit is called salvation about forty times in the New Testament; whereas I do not find, that it once uses the noun (*salutia*) salva-

tion for miraculous cures, nor for any merely temporal deliverance at all, unless in *Acts vii. 25.* where *Stephen* says, that *Moses* supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; or, as it is in the Greek, (*ἵδωμεν αὐτοὺς σωθήναι*) would give salvation to them: And even that deliverance might be called by this name, because it was typical of the more glorious one by Jesus Christ; and the apostle *Peter* here speaks of a salvation which every one needs, including himself

there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13. Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

14. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15. But, when they

which his being the head of the corner principally refers, to be found in any one whatsoever besides himself: For there is no other person of sufficient dignity, merit, and power, whose name can be pleaded, or depended upon, for salvation; or whom God has graciously appointed and granted to the men of this lower world, by whom (*du*) it is fit, or meet, and worthy of God, that any of us should be saved; or by whom we ought to expect, or ever can have, deliverance from sin and misery, from the curse of the law, and the wrath to come.

13 Now when the council observed (*ταυτα παρατηρησαι*) the liberty of spirit, and undaunted courage, and the freedom and fluency of expression with which the two apostles, Peter and John, spoke to the supreme court of the Jewish nation, before which they were arraigned as malefactors, that could expect no favour from them; and when they understood that they were persons of no polite education in the schools, or at the feet of any of their doctors, but were private obscure fishermen, even idiots, (*idiotai*) as to human science, compared with themselves; they were exceedingly amazed, and knew not how to account for the wisdom, spirit, and firmness of mind, that appeared in them, till they recollected that they had been formerly seen in company with Jesus, as his followers and disciples, and had been brought up under him, in whose name they had preached, and wrought the cure.

14 And the council, at the same time, seeing the man stand before them perfectly sound and whole, who till then had continued so lame, for forty years together, as not to be able to do any thing like it before; they could say nothing against the miracle, either to depreciate, or confute it.

15, 16 However, being stung in their consciences, and

N O T E.

himself and all Israel: But surely it could not be said of himself: and the whole council, and of all the people of Israel, (ver. 10.) that they needed miraculous cures in the name of Christ, by which, in that respect, they must be saved: (*οτι οδιν σωθηται εν ονοματι*) I therefore can by no means think that this strong and lively passage is to be sunk and restrained, as some contend that it should to the case of working miracles: On the other hand, there seems to me to be a great beauty in the occasion that the apostle took, and in the gradation that he made, from the temporal deliverance which had been wrought in healing the poor cripple by the power of Christ, to that of a much nobler and

more important kind, which is brought in by Christ to impotent and sinful souls; he therein following the admirable custom of his great Lord and Master, who often took occasion from earthly to speak of spiritual things; as particularly when, upon his having mentioned the miracle of the loaves, he discoursed at large concerning himself as the bread of life. (*John vi. 26.—58.*) But if miraculous cures were likewise included in the apostle's design, it plainly shews, as Dr. Whitby observes, that no true miracles have been ever done since Christ's ascension, by an invocation of the names of saints, as is pretended by the church of Rome: For there is no other name, by which they can be wrought.

they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

and filled with envy, they, instead of seeking after salvation by Jesus Christ, according to the apostles doctrine, resolved to put what stop they could to their preaching; and, ordering them to withdraw from the court, they entered into a close consultation about them, saying, What course shall we take with these men? or, what can we do to them, who are like to give us as much trouble, as ever we met with from Jesus himself? For that they really have performed a very famous miracle, in the name of Jesus, is publicly known to all the inhabitants of this great metropolis, so that we cannot hush it up; and the fact is so plain and evident in all the circumstances of it, that it is to no manner of purpose for us to go about to deny it, and to punish them for it; it would be only exposing our own character, and enraging the people against us, to attempt any thing of this kind.

17 But, that they may not propagate the story, and their own notions with it, to gain profelytes, and make people think highly of Jesus, and with indignation of us, as though we had murdered the best of men, if not one that was more than a man; let us send for them in, and severely charge them, upon pain of our utmost displeasure, never to publish their doctrine concerning him again; no, nor so much as speak of it in private to any man whatsoever; nor to pretend that they have his commission for it, or have power from him to work miracles.

18 Accordingly, they ordered them to be called into court, and then strictly enjoined them, at their peril, never to open their lips again, or preach any more, either publicly or privately, about Jesus, under pretence of authority from him to spread the glory of his name.

19 But both *Peter* and *John*, in reply, said to them, with a noble and undaunted fortitude of spirit, and with the most pointed reasoning, Though we would pay you all becoming deference; yet, whether we can acquit ourselves to our own consciences, and do justice to truth and to mankind, or whether it be lawful and right, in the sight of the infinitely wise and holy Creator and Governor, and impartial Judge of the whole-world, to whom we must be accountable; whether, we say, it be any way justifiable for us to comply with your orders, rather than pay obedience to his express commands, whose authority is undoubtedly superior to all human injunctions whatsoever, and who we are absolutely sure has charged us to preach the very doctrine, which ye forbid us to mention; we appeal to your own consciences to determine,

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 And, being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

termine, and leave it with yourselves to judge, as ever ye will answer it at the great day of account.

20 For, as to ourselves, we think this point admits of no debate; and we neither dare, nor can, submit to a decree, so utterly inconsistent with our allegiance unto God himself; nor refrain publishing the great and important things, pertaining to the salvation of lost sinners, which we ourselves have been eye-witnesses of, and have heard from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, and have experienced the power and goodness of in our own souls.

21 The sanhedrim finding that there was no dealing with these men in a way of argument, Christ having given them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist, according to his promise, (*Luke xxi. 15.*) they repeated their former threatenings, and so dismissed them, as not knowing what to do more, than endeavouring to fright them as much as they could; because they were afraid of incensing the people, and raising a tumult, if they should proceed to any farther punishment: For the multitude in general, were so affected with the miracle which had been wrought, that they could not but admire it, as an act of wonderful power and mercy, and express their praises of God for it.

22 And that which magnified this miraculous cure, in their account, was, that the man, on whom it was wrought, was about forty years old, and so was able to give them such a relation of his lameness from his child-hood up, to the day of his healing, as shewed his disease to have been an inveterate one, and no way likely to be ever removed by any human remedies whatsoever.

23 The apostles being thus set at liberty, by the gracious over-ruling providence of God, which appeared in their favour; they immediately returned to their own beloved company, on whom the Holy Ghost had fallen, together with themselves, and to whom they were related, as brethren in Christ, of the same church and family, spirit and temper, partakers of the same gospel-privileges and fellowship, faith and joy, and whom they chose for their companions on earth, and hoped to live with for ever in heaven.

N O T E.

* By their own company seems to be meant the 120, who were were said to have *companyed with the apostles, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, and were afterwards filled with the Holy Ghost,* *son, chap. xii. 5, 12.*

heaven; and they gave them a full account of all the severe and unrighteous things, that the council had said to them, and of the reply which they were enabled to make, by the Spirit of Christ that was in them, and of the manner of their discharge.

24 And when they heard that, they lift up their voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

24 And as soon as their fellow-christians had heard the affecting narrative, they all, in raptures of wonder and joy, made their solemn and fervent addresses to the throne of grace, as with one mouth and one soul, (*αὐθρομῶδες*) saying, Lord, thou art the only living and true God, who, by thine almighty power, gavest being to heaven and earth, and the sea, and to all ranks, orders, and individuals of creatures that are in them, and hast all hearts and all events under thy government and controul.

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

25 Who also, knowing the end from the beginning, hast plainly foretold what has lately come to pass, by the words of an inspired prophet, even of thy servant David *, saying, (*Psal.* lii. 1, 2.) Upon what principles, reasons, or motives, or to what manner of purpose, have the *Gentiles* (*ἔθνη*) inwardly fretted, and then foamed out their rage, and the people of *Israel* (*ἰσραηλῖται καὶ*) industriously meditated, contrived, and attempted empty, foolish, and fruitless things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

26 The princes of this world, whom Providence had laid the highest obligations upon, by exalting them to regal dignity in the land of *Israel*, raised themselves up in a way of unworthy opposition; and the *Jewish* rulers, scribes, Pharisees, and elders, men of the greatest note for learning and authority in ecclesiastical affairs, who ought to have espoused the cause of religion and righteousness, assembled in their grand council, to concert injurious measures against God himself, and against the only true Messiah, whom he anointed.

27 For, of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of *Israel*, were gathered together,

27 For it is an unquestionable matter of fact, that both *Herod* the king of *Galilee*, and *Pontius Pilate* the governor of *Judea*, together with the *Roman* officers and soldiers, and all ranks and orders of the *Jewish* nation, (*Luke* xxiii. 1,—25.) assembled themselves, and became joint conspirators against the life of thy holy Son Jesus, who was (*παῖδα σου*) born thy immaculate child in flesh, (*Luke* i. 35. and ii. 27,—43.) and came to be thy righteous servant, (*Isa.* xlii. 1. and xlix. 6. and liii. 11.) and whom thou

N O T E.

* This, as several commentators have observed, intimates not only that *David* was inspired by the Spirit of God, in writing his *Psalms*; but as this, so all o-

ther *Psalms*, in the title of which no notice is taken of the penman, are to be reckoned to him.

thou hadst appointed, set apart and authorized, called, and furnished, by an unmeasurable unction of the Spirit, to execute his great office in his incarnate state upon earth.

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

28 In all this, how vile and malicious soever their designs and management were, thou didst over-rule the event, for the accomplishing of those things against him, (*chap. ii. 23.*) and by him, through his violent and atoning death, which in the eternal settlement * and disposals of thy will and wisdom, in the counsels of peace, thou hadst fore-ordained should come to pass, for thine own glory, the Redeemer's exaltation, and the salvation of thy chosen people.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatnings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

29 And now, Lord †, we humbly beseech thee, that as thou hast thus far shewn thy infinite wisdom and Almighty power, thou wouldst take notice of their unrighteous threatnings, to restrain and defeat them, or to turn them to thy praise; and that, notwithstanding these and all other terrors, thou wouldst graciously assist, and enable every one of us, thy servants, to publish thy gospel with all freedom and holy confidence, presence of mind, and liberty of speech.

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

30 That we may be emboldened, confirmed, and owned herein, by still further displays of thy glorious power, in a supernatural way, for curing all manner of spiritual, as well as corporal maladies; and by granting, that wonderful miracles may be wrought of every kind, as there may be occasion, (*see the note on chap. ii. 22.*) by authority and virtue derived from, and to the glory of thy Holy One, even Jesus, who is not only thy eternal Son in his original nature; but also, (*τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἐν*) thy holy Child, by fleshly birth, and thy consecrated servant in office, by thine own appointment.

31 And

N O T E S.

* The *hand of God* seems sometimes in scripture to signify his all-governing and disposing will; (*see Neb. ii. 8, 18. Job ii. 10. Psal. xcv. 4. and Eccles. ii. 24. and ix. 1.*) and this I take to be its meaning here, because it relates to what God did in ancient counsels before-hand, rather than in his execution of them afterwards.

† Though I have given the Paraphrase on this and the following verse, according to the usual sense of commentators; yet it is humbly submitted to the reader's judgment, whether, as some have apprehended, the *Lord*, to whom this prayer was most immediately directed, were not the person of the Holy Ghost, because all the things here ascribed to God, were performed immediately by

him, he was the immediate divine agent in the creation of the world, (*Gen. i. 2.*) he spoke immediately by the *mouth of David*, (*2 Pet. i. 2.*) and immediately formed the human nature of the child *Jesus*, who, on that account, was said to be *that holy thing, which was born of the virgin*, and was called the Son of God, (*Luke i. 35.*) and it was he that immediately anointed Jesus as God's servant in human nature. (*Luke iv. 18.*) It was likewise by his hand, or his power and conduct, that Christ offered himself to God; (*Heb. ix. 14.*) and it was by him that the apostles preached the gospel with all boldness, and wrought miracles. (*ver. 31. and 1 Cor. xii. 3.—11.*) See *The True Script. Doctr. of the Holy Trin. Appendix, No. I. p. 97, 98.*

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles

31 And while they were yet speaking, God heard them; (Isa. lxxv. 24.) for no sooner had they finished this religious exercise, than the room, in which they were met together, was miraculously shaken, as by a rushing mighty wind, like what they had felt in a former assembly, (*chap. ii. 2.*) as a signal of his extraordinary presence with them: And, in immediate answer to their prayers, this whole company were again under a fresh effusion of the Holy Ghost, (see the note on *chap. ii. 3.*) who filled their souls with holy joy and courage; so that they, from that time forward, preached the gospel with a noble liberty of spirit, and without fear of the faces of the greatest men whatsoever.

32 As to the whole body of believers, which by this time were a great company, the last mentioned five thousand converts, (*ver. 4.*) after the example of the first three thousand, (*chap. ii. 41,—46.*) were so united in faith and love, that how various soever their natural tempers were, and how much soever they had been strangers to one another, and of different sects and parties before, they were now as entirely harmonious, and heartily affectionate to their fellow-Christians, without distinction, as if they had all been animated with one soul: And as an effect and evidence of this, and as a means of further promoting it, none of them, no not of the richest among them, reserved any of his worldly goods, for his own private and peculiar use, but freely gave up all for the service of the Christian community.

33 The twelve apostles also went on bravely with their work, insisting on the great doctrines of the gospel, and particularly on the resurrection of Christ from the dead, with abundance of fervor, strength, and clearness, and with attending miracles, and efficacious influences of the Spirit; and at the same time, such rich measures of divine grace were diffused among all the disciples, as were an evident token of their being highly in favour with God, and produced the greatest contempt of this world, and benevolence toward men.

34, 35 Nor was there any one of this household of faith, though ever so poor, that was in want of the necessaries of life: For as many of this New Testament-church, as had any estate in lands or houses, whether in *Palestine*, or other countries, sold them; and, bringing the money raised by the sale, they laid it at the apostles feet, in token of their great indifference to riches, and of their freely surrendering them up to their management, for the honour of Christ, and the benefit of the church: And the apostles,

apostles feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And *Joses*, who by the apostles was surnamed *Barnabas*, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles feet.

like wise and faithful stewards, ordered proper distributions to be made with the utmost prudence, frugality, and impartiality, to every one, in proportion to his exigence.

36, 37 Particularly, among the rest, there was one *Joses*, whom for his great liberality and excellent talents, whereby he became eminently useful, both in temporal and spiritual concerns, the apostles surnamed *Barnabas*, which in the Syriac language, properly signifies the *son of a prophet*, and by just construction, the *son* (*υιος παρακλητικος*) of *comfort*, or of *exhortation*: This man was by descent of the tribe of *Levi*, and by country a native of the fertile island called *Cyprus*; and, being possessed of an estate in land there, * he readily sold it; and, like one that had done with this world, committed the price which he received for it, to the care of the apostles, to dispose of it in a way of religious charity, for the support of the poor members of Christ.

RECollections.

How often do the greatest enemies one to another unite, like the *scribes* and *Sadducees*, in their unreasonable and violent opposition to Christ and his gospel, and in the most indefensible persecutions of his servants for his sake! And yet how wonderfully will the word of the Lord, attended with the power of his Spirit, prevail in the face of all opposition, to the conversion of thousands, that were before most inveterately set against him! And what a noble spirit of wisdom, resolution, and courage, can he inspire his once most cowardly servants with, to assert his cause, and make a brave and free confession of a crucified and risen Saviour, and to withstand and confound the most potent and learned of their adversaries, and carry conviction to their consciences, that there is a surprising advantage in having been with Jesus! He can easily restrain the wrath of man, and make the remainder of it praise him; and how much soever he may be set at nought, by men of figure and authority, he is nevertheless the chief corner-stone of the church, that can never be shaken; neither is there salvation in any other. And O what incontestible evidence is there in that eternal truth, that, even in times of the greatest danger, it is better to obey God than man! He is the Lord God Almighty, the maker and governor of all things; nothing can come to pass without his permission, or order; and all is but a fulfilling of the scriptures, and of his own ancient decrees, which are entirely hid from us, till unfolded in events, that, whatever be the means of producing them, are over-ruled by a holy Providence, to the glory of God, and the good of his people. How worthy therefore is he to be prayed to; and how eminently does he honour his distinguishing character, as a God hearing prayer, in that, he sometimes answers while we are yet speaking! And as he has promised his Spirit to them that ask him; so when he herein performs his good word to us, What a heavenly commotion will there be in our souls! what holy confidence and joy shall we have in him; and how shall we despise the outrage and threatnings of his and our enemies! What a glory does he put upon his ministers, some of whom

NOTE.

* It being said of *Joses*, when his land was spoken of, that he was of the country of *Cyprus*, intimates that it lay there, and this being a foreign country, he, though a *Levite*, might undoubtedly have land there, in full consistence with the original law, about dividing the land of *Canaan*; (*Numb.* xviii. 29. and *Deut.* x. 9.) for notwithstanding that *Levites* and *Levites* sometimes had land even in *Judea* itself, by purchase, gift, or inheritance, as appears from *Joachim* (*Josh.* xxiv. 33.) and from *Zuph*, (*1 Sam.* i. and ix. 5. compared with *1 Chron.* 35. 43, 51.) much more might he have land in a foreign country.

he makes to be sons of consolation indeed; and upon his church and people, whom he knits together by the sweetest bands of love, fills with all goodness to others, and with such experiences of his grace and favour to themselves, as give them a holy contempt of this world, and engage them to sequester themselves from it, in the best manner, and according to the calls of his Providence.

C H A P. V.

The sin and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, 1,—11. The apostles work many miracles, to the increase of the church, 12,—16. They are again imprisoned, and an angel delivers them, ordering them to go on in preaching, which they did, to the great vexation of their enemies, 17,—25. They are brought again before the Sanhedrim and examined, and make their defence, 26,—33. Gamaliel's prudent advice, upon which they are dismissed with scourging, 34,—40. They depart rejoicing, and proceed in their work, 41, 42.

TEXT.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

PARAPHRASE.

BUT, as the best churches upon earth have their imperfections, so there were two notorious hypocrites even in this, which tarnished its glory; and awful judgments were executed in righteousness on them, which damped its joy. A certain man and his wife, *Ananias and Sapphira* by name, made a profession of Christianity; and being ambitious of the reputation of having as much zeal and charity, as *Barnabas* himself, they sold an estate, pretending to devote the price of it to God;

2 And when they had got the money, they being only almost Christians, still under the prevalence of unbelief and covetousness, their hearts failed them; and so they contrived together to make a private reserve of one part of it for their own use, and to deliver up the rest to the apostles, in such a manner, as might impose upon them, and induce them to believe that it was the whole; and might entitle themselves to a maintenance out of the common fund, as if they had nothing left of their own.

3 But *Peter*, having the gift of discerning spirits, well knew, and soon detected the vile fraud, saying to the husband, who came alone to bring a part of the money, under pretence of its being the whole, *Ananias*, what a horrible and shocking impiety is this? How durst you thus yield yourself up to Satan's power, and act under his influence to do his work, in belying the Spirit, that Holy One, who abhors all iniquity, (*ψευδοὺς οὐ το πνεῦμα το ἅγιον*) by falsely pretending to act as generous and zealous a part as any other, by his suggestion to, and influence upon

upon you; or in attempting to deceive him, as refusing and acting in us, the apostles of the Lord Jesus, by hypocritically professing to offer to us the whole price of the land you have sold, and at the same time deliberately and consultedly withholding a part of it for your own private use?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

4 While you had the estate in your own possession, was it not a property that you might have kept, if you would? And after you had thought fit to sell it, was not the money at your own disposal? You was under no necessity either of selling it at all; or afterwards, if you were minded to add any thing to the common stock, for the use of the church, you was at full liberty to put in, either a part, or the whole of the price, just as you pleased: Why then have you thus freely consented to Satan's temptation, who could not have forced you to it, by using and contriving this fraudulent management in your own wicked heart, as being drawn away, and enticed to it, by your own lusts of covetousness and ambition? You have herein been guilty of a most abominable and aggravated lie, not to man only, but to the Holy Spirit himself, who, you know, eminently dwells and works in us, and who is truly and properly the heart-searching God, and will not be mocked; but will severely avenge the affront, in jealousy for his own glory, and to deter others from any such further insults upon him, to the corrupting of the church.

5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

5 And as God, at the beginning of the *Mosaic* dispensation, made fearful examples of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for offering strange fire, and of *Corah* and his company, for rebelling against *Moses* and *Aaron*, by immediately striking them dead; (*Numb.* iii. 4. and xvi. 1,—35.) so, to vindicate the honour and authority of the gospel-dispensation, which was newly set up, as soon as *Ananias* heard *Peter's* awful rebuke, the Spirit of the Lord, to whom he had lied, struck him with such mighty vengeance, that he instantly fell down, and died upon the spot; and this tremendous judgment had its desirable good effect upon all that heard of it, so as to fill them with exceeding great awe and dread of ever attempting to act such an impious, hypocritical part afterwards.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

6 And as soon as *Ananias* expired, several young men, there present, got up, and, according to the usual manner of burying, wrapped the corpse about with proper grave-cloaths, and, carrying it out of the company, gave it a decent interment.

7 And it was about the space of three

7 About three hours after he was dead, *Sapphira* his wife, being ignorant (as Providence would have it)

three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs

it) of what had befallen him, came into the room, where the apostles and the other disciples were, expecting her share of thanks and applause for consenting to the sale of the land, and to the surrender of the money for the use of the church.

8 And *Peter* said unto her, Tell me honestly and truly, whether your husband sold the estate only for so much money as he brought to the charitable fund: And she, thinking to conceal the fraud, as she supposed her husband had before, boldly answered, Yes, it was just for that sum, and no more.

9 Then *Peter*, knowing the utter falshood of what she had said, replied, How monstrously wicked and surprising is it, that both your husband and you, who professed to be sincere converts, should thus consult together to try whether the Spirit of God, who resides in us, could see through, and bring to light, your gross hypocrisy and lie! And how durst ye run the desperate risk of trying whether he knew it or not, and of provoking him at this rate? Behold his severe vengeance on such bold transgressors! As your husband has been struck dead for this heinous sin, the same persons that carried him to his burial, are just now returning, and are at the very door of this house; and they, in like manner, shall immediately be the bearers of your body to the grave.

10 Whereupon she also, being suddenly struck as with a dart from heaven, fell down at the apostle's feet, where the whole of the money ought to have been laid, and instantly expired: And the young men coming in, and finding her dead, bore her corpse to the place of interment, and buried her close by her husband, where they both lay together as monuments of vindictive justice, for the notorious lie they had told, and the affront they had offered to the Holy Spirit.

11 And this was such an evident and awful appearance of divine jealousy, holiness, and resentment, as filled the whole church with solemn reverence of the Spirit of Christ, as manifesting himself in and by the apostles, and with a religious fear of offending him; and the generality of others, that heard of these things, were in great consternation and dread, like the men of *Bethshemesb*, (1 Sam. vi. 20.) as unable to stand before this Holy Lord God, who had so tremendously vindicated his own, and the apostles honour, in the new dispensation that was introduced among them.

12 And still further to confirm its divine authority, and, at the same time, to soften its terrors, and shew its gracious and direct tendency and design, abundance

signs and wonders wrought among the people: (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch:

12 And of the

rest durst no man

join himself to

them: but the

people magnified

them.

13 And of the

rest durst no man

join himself to

them: but the

people magnified

them.

14 And believers

were the more ad-

ded to the Lord,

multitudes both of

men and women.)

15 Infomuch that

they brought forth

the sick into the

streets, and laid

them on beds and

couches, that, at

the least, the sha-

dow of Peter pass-

ing by might over-

shadow some of

them.

16 There came

also a multitude

out of the cities

round about unto

Jerusalem, bring-

ing sick folks, and

them which were

vexed

by evil spirits:

And all these, accord-

ing

to the

report

they

had

heard,

came,

with

the

like

faith,

out

of the merciful strain, as tokens of the presence of God's goodness, as well as power, with the apostles, who performed those wonderful works upon, and in the view of, great multitudes: (see the note on chap. ii. 22.) And the members of the church were so far from murmuring against the apostles, for the judgment executed upon two of their number, that they unanimously, affectionately, and frequently assembled for public worship with them, in the grand passage to the temple, called *Solomon's porch*. (See the Paraphrase on chap. iii. 11.)

13 But (21) the rest of the people were so terrified at the sudden death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, * that none of them durst join themselves to the church in a hypocritical manner, under pretence of being converted, while they were conscious to themselves that they really were not so: Nevertheless, the bulk of the common people had a high veneration, and spoke very respectfully of the apostles, and of the wonders of mercy and judgment that the Spirit of the Lord had wrought by them.

14 And real believers, who cordially embraced the gospel, were, by a divine influence attending and blessing all these means, more abundantly added to the visible church of Christ, to make a public solemn profession of his name, even vast numbers of both sexes, male and female, who are all one in Christ Jesus: (Gal. iii. 28.)

15 And so famous were the miracles wrought by that divine power, which was so conspicuous in the apostles, and so high did *Peter* especially stand in the opinion of the people, that they brought their sick and weak friends out of their houses into the streets of *Jerusalem*, and there laid them on beds and couches, as helpless, miserable, and moving objects, that when this great apostle of the circumcision should go that way, he might have compassion upon them: or that, at least, the shadow of his body might pass over some of them, which they believed would be effectual for healing.

16 Great multitudes also, upon the report they had heard, came, with the like faith, out of the cities and country towns, all round about *Jerusalem*, bringing along with them some people that were sick of various distempers, and others that were possessed and tormented by evil spirits: And all these, accord-

NOTE

* I have here given what I take to be the most genuine sense of these words; he that would see other interpretations may consult Dr. *Lightfoot* on this verse.

weared with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.

ing to expectation, were miraculously cured, as fast as they were brought, to the further increase of the reputation of Christ's servants.

17 On occasion of people's thus flocking to the apostles, and their doing such wonderful works, the high-priest was roused and alarmed, as were also all his party *, which were of the *Sadducean* sect; and they were exceedingly provoked with envy at them, and in zeal for their own principles, to think that the apostles gained so much ground upon the people, by preaching the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, and that they themselves had not taken more effectual measures to put a stop to them, who, in this way of going on, were like to over-turn the power of the priesthood, and their own notions of a total and final death with the body.

18 And so they ordered all the apostles (*ver.* 29.) to be apprehended, as *Peter* and *John* had been before; (*chap.* iv. 3.) and, for the greater terror and disgrace, as well as confinement, to be clapped up in the common jail with the most infamous and notorious criminals.

19 But the Lord Christ, whose cause they espoused, and who will ever own them that appear for him, and trust in him, dispatched an angel from heaven the following night, who burst the locks, bars, and bolts, struck the keepers, that were set upon watch and ward, with a senseless stupor, and opened the prison-door; and then conducted the apostles safe out of the jail, giving them at the same time the following charge, saying,

20 Notwithstanding all the fury, prohibitions, and violence of your enemies, and without fearing any thing from them, go on with your Lord's work; repair to the temple, and there stand and speak resolutely and boldly in the face of your most inveterate and powerful adversaries: And as many of the common people, whose souls are as precious as any others, will be brought to hear and receive your testimony, preach to them every thing that relates to the doctrine of eternal life, through a risen Saviour, which the *Sadducees* deny, but which is, of all others, worthy to be called by the name of life.

21 And,

NOTE.

* *Them that were with him*, seems to signify persons of his party, and to intimate, that he himself was a *Sadducee*, and that a great part of the sanhedrim now consisted of persons of that sect, though there was also a mixture of *Pharisees* with them, as appears from *chap.*

xxiii. 6. And the *Sadducees* all along in this history appear to have been the most furious adversaries to the apostles, whose chief business was to preach a risen Saviour, and the doctrines that depend upon, and stand connected with, that great article of the Christian faith.

21 And, when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But, when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told.

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety; and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came
one

21 And, upon hearing this from such a heavenly messenger, they took courage; and, embracing the very first opportunity, went into the temple early on the next morning; and, in the most public manner, preached salvation to eternal life, through the lately crucified and risen Jesus. In the mean while, the high-priest and his partisans, supposing that the apostles were still in safe custody, went and summoned together an extraordinary council, calling in, not only the members of the sanhedrim, but likewise (*πρωτοι τινι γερουσιας*) all the eldership of Israel, that used to meet as judges * in other courts at Jerusalem; and then sent some of their officers to the jail, ordering them to bring the prisoners before them.

22, 23 But when the officers † went, in obedience to their commands, and found, to their great surprise, that all the apostles were got out of jail, they soon came back, and made their report, saying, We have been at the prison to execute your orders; and truly, at our arrival, we found all the doors, and every thing about it, fast, without the least signs of a breach, in any part whatsoever; and we saw the guards in their proper posts, standing without side, and watching the doors with all imaginable care and diligence: But, to our own and their great astonishment, when we unlocked the doors, and went in, we could not find so much as one of the prisoners that we were sent to fetch.

24 When the high-priest, and the captain of the temple, and the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priests, (see the note on *Matth. ii. 4.*) heard this account, they were perfectly non-plust, being in the utmost doubt and perplexity of mind to think how this could possibly be, what it was like to come to in further events, and what measures they should take to prevent any bad consequences of it to themselves and their church.

25 And (*δι*) what added to their consternation

was

NOTES.

* There were, says Dr. Lightfoot on this place, judges, or elders, of two other judicatories in Jerusalem; one in the outer court gate, or in Solomon's porch; and the other in the inner, or the beautiful gate of the temple, consisting of twenty-three men a-piece; and so this busy high-priest called together all the three courts, or benches of judges in Jerusalem; one hundred and seventeen in all, if there was a full appearance, (the Lord so disposing it) that all his apostles, and all his chief enemies might deal together, &c.

† These seem to have been either ecclesiastical or civil officers; for the word (*υπηρηται*) by which they are here expressed, properly signifies *Ministers*; and I do not find that it is ever used for military officers: As these therefore were under the command of the captain of the temple, (*ver. 26.*) we may rather conclude that this was the captain of the several watches which the priests kept in the temple, than of the Roman garrison, in the tower of Antonia, according to the note on *chap. iv. 1.*

one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And, when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

18 Saying, Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

was, that in the midst of all their anxiety and confusion of thought, there came one into court, and brought them strange tidings, saying, How amazing is what I have to tell this venerable body! The very men whom ye yesterday threw into the common jail, and took so much care to secure there, are this instant standing openly and boldly in the temple, and preaching to the people, in contempt of your authority, just as they used to do before they were taken up for it.

26 Upon this information, the captain of the temple himself went with the officers, (*ver.* 22.) and got the apostles away, in as civil and respectful a manner as possible, without offering to seize them with violence, or to treat them with any rudeness; they taking this method, not from any fear of God, or real regard to those holy men, but for fear of exasperating, and being stoned by the common people, who had a great esteem and veneration for the apostles, and were now again brought to favour Christ's righteous cause, as formerly, though when he came upon his trial, they, under the influence of the priests, cried out, Crucify him, crucify him. (*Luke* xxi. 21.)

27, 28 And as soon as the captain and his officers had taken them from the company, they brought them into court; and the high-priest, as president of this extraordinary council, severely reprimanded and upbraided the apostles, as though they had broke prison, as well as disobeyed orders; and imperiously demanded of them, saying, Do not ye remember that we not long since, (*chap.* iv. 18.) after having shewn much lenity and forbearance, strictly charged two of the chief among you in open court, on pain of our highest displeasure, never once to mention the name of Jesus more, or presume to preach up his resurrection, and other things, to his honour, by a pretended commission from him? and yet behold the insolence and contempt, the unpardonable affront, and abuse of our goodness! Ye, in defiance of all our kindness, authority, and power, have industriously, and in the most public manner, spread your new, detestable, and pernicious doctrine through all Jerusalem, our great and holy city; and it plainly appears, by your behaviour, that ye design, if possible, to bring the greatest guilt and scandal upon us, and to incense the people against us, for having shed, what ye call the innocent blood of this man, whom we cannot think of but with the utmost abhorrence and contempt; but of whom ye talk as highly as if he were a non-such for worth, dignity, and power, and for sanctity, and being in favour with God.

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost,

29 Then Peter and the rest of the apostles, who concurred with him, and spake in their turns for themselves, courageously replied, saying, Human laws are never to come into competition with the divine; and as those of us, that were thus interdicted by your august body before, have intimated, (*chap. iv. 19.*) so we all now stand to it, that it is our undoubted and indispensable duty to obey the commands of God, rather than any injunctions of the greatest men, or councils on earth, whenever they are inconsistent with, or contrary one to the other, which is the present case; and, whatsoever may be the consequence, we are neither afraid, nor ashamed to preach Christ, even to you yourselves, in hope that he may bless it to some of you.

30 The sum of our doctrine is this: The God of our fathers, whom ye, as well as we, own for your God, and who entered into a peculiar visible covenant-relation with them and their children, raised up Jesus first among you as the greatest of prophets, to whom ye ought to have hearkened, according to God's own prediction and command by *Moses*; (*Deut. xviii. 15.*) and afterwards to testify his highest approbation and acceptance, he, as the *God of peace*, reconciled to sinners, through the blood of his atoning sacrifice, which is *the blood of the everlasting covenant*, brought our Lord Jesus again from the dead, (*Heb. xiii. 20.*) whom ye really murdered, though under the form of a law-process, and that in the most ignominious manner, by hanging him on the accursed tree, as if he had been the vilest of malefactors.

31 Even him has God not only raised to life, but likewise, by a glorious operation of his almighty power, has exalted to the greatest dignity, honour, and universal dominion in heaven and earth, that he may live and reign on high, with all authority and grace, as a Prince enthroned in all the glory, majesty, and power of his kingdom, and as the only all-sufficient Saviour, able and willing to give to the whole *Israel of God*, inclusive of those very *Jews* that crucified him, the most necessary and inestimable blessings, even repentance, by the effectual working of his Spirit upon the hearts of the most obdurate and impenitent; and the free and full pardon of all the trespasses of the very worst among them, through faith in his blood.

32 And these things we spake with the utmost assurance; being appointed by Christ himself to testify them, and having been ourselves witnesses, particularly of his resurrection and ascension to glory, and

Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

and of the wonderful and endearing fruits of his exaltation: Yea, the Holy Ghost himself likewise bears witness, in the highest manner, to these important doctrines, who, with convincing light, and powerful energy, works in and by us, and has made many others, together with ourselves, partakers of their sweet and happy influence; and whom God has given, and will still further give, to all that are brought to yield themselves up to the obedience of faith, and chuse to obey him, rather than man; all these have the witness in themselves, and are a succession of witnesses, upon experience, of the same things: And there is virtue, grace, and merit enough in this Lord of glory, to melt even *your* hearts into repenting sorrows, and to extend free forgiveness to you, that had so deep a hand in his crucifixion.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

33 When the council heard this plain and touching discourse, instead of submitting to its strength and evidence, or relenting with godly sorrow, like them that were pricked in their heart; (*chap. ii. 37.*) and instead of seeking forgiveness of sins from the exalted Saviour, they were cut through (*δυσπνοῦντες*) with indignation, rage, and envy; and immediately were for consulting measures about putting all the apostles to death, and so getting rid of them at once, and effectually preventing the further progress of the gospel.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space,

34 But (*δὲ*) as soon as this unrighteous and barbarous design began to discover itself, a check was put upon it by a learned, grave, and venerable man of the assembly, viz. *Gamaliel*, who was of the sect of the *Pharisees*, a noted scribe, or teacher in their public schools, and a man of considerable influence, character, and esteem, among the people for wisdom, learning, and piety, the * same person that was tutor to *Saul of Tarsus*, who afterwards became the great apostle of the *Gentiles*. (*chap. xxii. 3.*) This famous *rabbi* got up, and ordered all the apostles to be taken for a little while out of court, that there might be the greater freedom of debate.

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what

35 And upon their withdrawing, he being an enemy to the corrupt notions of the *Sadducees*, and having favourable thoughts of the apostles, and a regard to the common principles of humanity and justice,

N O T E.

* It is likewise probably supposed from what is found in *Talmudical* writings, that this *Gamaliel* was the son of good old *Simion*, who took Christ up in his arms, when he was presented in the

temple, (*Luke ii. 25, 28.*) and was the grandson of the famous *Hillel*, one of the most eminent among the *Jewish* doctors. See *Præd. Connest.* Vol. II. b. viii. p. 519, 529.

ye intend to do, as touching these men.

tice, and to the public peace, made the following prudent and pacific speech, Ye rulers of God's people *Israel*, who ought to be governed by reason and religion, it greatly behoves you to be very cautious, and to take heed of doing any thing rashly in a passion, and to consider matters thoroughly and calmly, as in the sight and presence of God, before ye determine any thing against these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be some body, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

36 For ye all well know, that some time since, one * *Theudas* set himself up as the head of a party, pretending to be a man of great authority and power, and that he would do wonderful feats; and he so far imposed upon the people, that about four hundred men joined him, in hopes of great preferment under him; and yet he was soon cut off, and his cause died with him: For all his party, that had followed him, immediately dispersed and came to nothing, without any more ado; and so saved us, and the civil government, all further trouble about them.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

37 After that impostor, there rose up another, viz. one *Judas of Galilee*, who appeared in the reign of *Cæsar Augustus*. when the decree was issued out for a general enrollment; (*Luke ii. 1.*) this man also, setting up with high pretences for liberty, deluded the people to such a degree, that abundance of them ran after him, and had great expectations from him: But he, in like manner, soon came to an untimely death, and all his adherents were thereupon discomfited; and we heard no more of them.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought:

38 And now, my brethren, let us learn wisdom and temper in the present crisis, from these examples, and not go into any hasty and violent measures, to punish or restrain these men by force, that have been brought before us: For if the surprising story they tell about the resurrection of Jesus, the head of their sect, who we are sure was actually crucified, and their celebrated miracles, in his name; be all the whim and work of silly, weak enthusiasts; nay, if the whole of this affair be the artful contrivance and juggling management of cunning impostors, who, under a pretence of religion, are carrying on secular views, we may reasonably conclude from what has been in the forementioned instances, that their cause will

N O T E.

* How far the persons and facts referred to in this and the following verse agree, or disagree, to *Josephus's* account of *Theudas*, and of *Judas of Galilee*, whom he also calls *Judas Gaulonites*, the curious reader may inform himself, by consulting *Dr. Lightfoot* on this place,

and *Dr. Lardner's Cred. of the Gosp. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 355, &c. and *Mr. Biscoe's sermons at Boyle's Lectures*, p. 662. By all which it appears, that the *Theudas* spoken of by *Josephus*, was another of that name, who rose before the *Theudas* mentioned by our sacred historian.

will soon die with their Master ; Divine Providence, and the course of things, will undoubtedly in a little time discover their designs, and sufficiently expose the men to universal contempt ; and so we need not risk our present reputation with the people, by using desperate methods to destroy what will fall of itself.

39 But, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

39 But if what they say and do, with plausible appearances of truth, should prove to be the effect of God's own counsel and operation ; it would be vain, impious, and dangerous for you to exert human authority or force to suppress it ; for *his counsel will stand, and he will do all his pleasure.* (Isa. xlv. 10.) Till therefore we see the event, we ought to be very careful, that we attempt nothing of that kind, lest we should happen to contract the dreadful guilt of waging war against the great God himself : *Wo to him that striveb with his Maker.* (Isa. xlv. 9.) For my part, I tremble at the consequence of so doing.

40 And to him they agreed : and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

40 And this speech was so rational and touching, that the generality of the council were so far softened in their tempers, and influenced to fall in with the prudent advice of this learned senator, as to drop the design of putting the apostles to death : And yet so great was their rage against them, that when they had ordered them back into court, and to be ignominiously, openly, and severely scourged for a pretended contempt of authority, they, in a haughty and menacing manner, strictly charged them never to make use of the name of Christ any more in their preaching or performances ; and so dismissed them for the present.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

41 They thereupon went away (*απο προσωπου του συνδριου*) from the face of that august assembly, without reviling them ; and so far were they from being discouraged, or ashamed, or intimidated by their commands, or by the indignity which had been so injuriously put upon them ; that, on the contrary, they rejoiced, not only amidst their sufferings, but in the thought, that the Lord Jesus had so highly honoured them, as to give them an opportunity of bearing a public and becoming testimony to him, by undergoing the greatest reproach among men, for the sake of his glorious name and cause.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

42 And so far were they from giving heed to, or being restrained by, the haughty prohibitions and ill usage they had met with, that they went on with their work, as vigorously and constantly, or more so than ever, both publicly in the temple to all sorts of people, and more privately in every house, where they came, to their friends and fellow-christians ; labouring

bouring night and day, both in secret, and in common time, to explain the gospel of salvation, and particularly to preach up Jesus Christ as crucified, and risen again from the dead.

RECOLUTIONS.

How easily do the corruptions of men's hearts, and the temptations of ambition and covetousness draw them into a lie ! But how abominable is this sin, especially, when it turns into hypocrisy towards God ; and most of all when it proceeds from atheistical conceits, as if the Divine Spirit, who is himself God, and manifestly acted as such in the apostles, does not know it, or cannot bring it to light ! And how should sinners tremble, and professors of Christianity be afraid, at the thought of prevaricating with that God, who can strike liars and hypocrites dead, and vindicate the honour of his last and brightest dispensation of grace, by terrible things in righteousness, on those that would bring his authority under contempt ! And yet with what blind and rash zeal have many, under a pretence of religion, set themselves against the most eminent ministers of Christ, and therein fought against God ! But his counsel and work shall stand, in defiance, and to the confusion of all that oppose them ; and he can raise up advocates for his righteous cause from amongst its most inveterate, learned, and potent enemies : And how remarkably has he owned and encouraged his faithful servants, opened prison-doors for them, wrought wonderful miracles of mercy and power by their hands, restrained and overruled the fury of rulers, awed the multitude, and increased the church, in the midst of all human attempts for suppressing it, to the confirmation of the gospel, and of our faith ! And how great soever the terrors and reproaches may be, that any of us endure for Christ's name's sake, we may despise them all, and count them our glory, and chusing to obey God rather than man, hold on our way to own and honour him, and publish the praises of a once crucified, and now risen Redeemer, who is exalted as a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to the most hardened and guilty criminals.

C H A P. VI.

The institution of the office of deacons for disposing of the church's stock, with the occasion of it, and an account of the seven that were chosen, 1,—7. Stephen, one of the seven, is disputed against, and accused to the Sanhedrim, 8,—14. And appears before them with an angelic lustre on his countenance, 15.

TEXT.

AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER some time, when converts, chiefly from among the lower ranks of people, were so exceedingly multiplied and added to the church, that there were scarcely benefactions enough for a comfortable supply of all their poor ; their beautiful harmony was so far broke in upon, that there arose heart-burnings and complaints among those Christians, who were Jews by birth, but used the Greek language in their synagogues, and common conversation, (see the note on *John* xii. 20.) against those that continued to read the Old Testament, and to speak in the Hebrew tongue ; because, in the distribution of the public charity, which, to prevent pro-

fulcency

fulcens and ill husbandry in the poor, was made day by day, as occasions required, they suspected at least, that due care was not taken of the *Grecian* widows, and others of *their* poor, while the greatest regard was shewn to those of the *Hebrew* denomination, as though these were to be deemed the most worthy, and to have the most liberal allowances from the fund, which had indeed been principally raised by contributions from their *Hebrew* friends.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

2 Hereupon the twelve apostles, though they had taken all possible care to make impartial distributions to every necessitous object, and had attended this service as far as their other more important affairs admitted, prudently summoned the church together, who had a joint interest, right, and concern in settling things to their own satisfaction: And, as *Jeibro* advised *Moses* to call in assistance for judging small causes, because the whole of his former work was too heavy for him; (*Exod. xviii. 21, &c.*) so they spoke to the whole community, saying, As the management of the church's stock now takes up a great deal of our time, and occasions jealousies, that may prejudise honest souls against us and our ministry, it is by no means fit or proper, that we should be diverted from our great work of preaching the gospel, and spend our time in daily ordering out of the common fund such supplies as are needful for supporting the expence of sacred ordinances, and relieving all that are to be maintained by it*.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,

3 Therefore, brethren, (for so we now, and from henceforth esteem and call you, with the utmost affection, as members of Christ, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance together with us) carefully consider this matter, and fix upon seven men out of your own

N O T E.

* As all necessary expences for carrying on the worship of God; and as the apostles themselves, as well as the poor, were doubtless to be supported out of the common stock, I have given such a paraphrase, as may take in the Lord's table, and the tables of the apostles, and of the poor members of the church; though the direct and immediate design of the office was to take care of the poor. And it is natural to think, that though *Stephen* and *Philip*, and, perhaps, some others of these first deacons, afterwards preached the gospel; yet, that they did this, not by virtue of their deaconship, but of some other commission given to them as evangelists; which, I apprehend, they received not before, but after they had been chosen to that

office: For though it was fit that they should be capable of administering spiritual counsel on all proper occasions, and have a spirit of discerning in those days, as may be intimated in their being full of the Holy Ghost; it is not likely that they, who were already evangelists, should be so far diverted from their main superior work, as to serve tables: And therefore it does not appear to me that, as some have thought, these were part of the seventy disciples which were chosen and ordained by our Lord himself, (*Luke x. 1.*) though they were probably some of the hundred and twenty mentioned *chap. i. 15.*; and possibly when any of these commenced evangelists, others were chosen into the deacon's office in their room.

wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and, when they

own number of believers, which may be sufficient for the present; men that have an established reputation for integrity, (*ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθοῖς*) and are plentifully endued with the extraordinary gifts and special graces of the Holy Spirit, to guide and assist them in the wise and faithful discharge of their duty; (see the note on chap. ii. 3.) and that are of approved prudence to order things to the best advantage, whom we, pursuant to your choice, and with your consent, may set apart for this very use, (*οὗτοι τῶν ἁγίων ταῦτων*) namely, for performing the office of deacons in disposing of the church-stock. (*ver. 2.*)

4 But as for us, the apostles of our Lord, we, according to the original design of our office, will give ourselves up entirely and uninterruptedly to the great duties of solemn prayer for all assistance and success in the work to which we are called, and of ministering the word of God's grace; and so labour in the service of Christ and souls, with all diligence and perseverance, and look up to him for a blessing.

5 And the whole Christian society were extremely taken with this proposal, as a happy expedient for reserving full liberty to the apostles to go on with their testimony to the Lord Jesus; and, at the same time, for taking due care of the temporal affairs of the church: Accordingly, upon serious deliberation, they, with great harmony and joint-concurrence, made choice of the following persons for the deacon's office, *viz. Stephen*, a man eminent for faith and faithfulness, and abundantly enriched with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; and *Philip*, who afterwards went about preaching Christ; (*chap. viii.*) to these two eminent men they joined *Prochorus*, and *Nicanor*, and *Timon*, and *Parmenas*, and * *Nicolas*, who, before his conversion to the faith of Christ, had been a proselyte of righteousness; and so by religion a Jew, though a native of *Antioch* in *Syria*, and so a *Gentile* by birth.

6 These, the brethren, (*ver. 3.*) presented to the apostles as the persons whom they had chosen to this office; and the apostles thereupon recommended them

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N O T E

* All these deacons having *Greek* names, seem to have been of the *Grecian* or *Hellenistical* part of the church, that their poor might have no room for further complaints of being neglected in the distributions of the public money. *Stephen* and *Philip* are spoken of at large in this and the two following chapters; but the scripture never mentions any of the rest again, unless this *Nicolas* were the

man from whom the abominable sect of the *Nicolaitans*, spoken of *Rev. ii. 6. 15.* took their name. If he advanced the impure notions which antiquity says they held, he must be sadly degenerated from his first faith: But it seems from *Eusebius*, (*Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 29.*) that by injurious misconstructions of his words, they fathered their filthy doctrines upon him.

they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

to the blessing of God by prayer, and laid their hands upon them, as a visible token that God would bless them, and bestow still further gifts and qualifications upon them, for a wise, faithful, and useful discharge of the trust which was then committed to them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

7 And as the peace of the church was now again restored, and the apostles were disincumbered from its secular concerns, and more at liberty, than before, to pursue their main work, they spread the doctrines of Christ in their ministrations with growing success; so that even in *Jerusalem* itself, where Christ had been rejected and crucified, it took root in many hearts; and converts daily increased more and more among them; yea, a great number of the *Jewish* priests, that used to be some of the most inveterate of our Lord's enemies, were effectually wrought upon by his Spirit, and brought over to believe on him, according to the divine command; and to yield all holy obedience to God by faith, (*ὡς ἡμεῖς τῷ κυρίῳ*) as its genuine fruit and effect.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

8 And, for the still greater propagation of the gospel, *Stephen*, being a man of abundance of faith, zeal, and holy courage, was spirited, authorised, and enabled to preach it, and to confirm it by wonderful miracles, which were (*σημεῖα*) signs, publicly exhibited, of God's owning it, in the sight of all the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

9 But as there were various synagogues for Hellenist *Jews*, and for proselytes of different nations, to assemble for prayer, and reading of the law, and other religious exercises; and they were generally the greatest zealots for *Judaism*, for the sake of which they, of all others, were most exposed to contempt and sufferings in their respective countries: So there were some that belonged to the synagogues of such freed-men of *Rome*, or their descendants, as had obtained this privilege by gift, or purchase, the first of which were called *Liberti*, and the second *Libertini*, in distinction from originally *Native Freemen*; and there were others that belonged to the several synagogues of *Cyrene* and *Alexandria*, and of *Cilicia* and *Asia*, who, thinking themselves a match for *Stephen*, whatsoever they might be for the apostles, openly opposed him, and challenged him to a dispute * about the grand points of Christianity.

K 2

10 And

NOTE

* The disputants against *Stephen* as *Saul* of *Tarsus* was a great scholar, of were, probably, either the tutors, or smart parts, and furious zeal against some other of the most learned and acute men of the schools, belonging to these synagogues, where the foreign youth were educated in *Jewish* learning; and Christianity, it is very likely that he was concerned in these debates, as well as in the stoning of *Stephen* to death, chap. vii. 57. and viii. 1.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council.

13 And by this, and such like means, they raised the prejudices, and inflamed the passions of the people, and of the Jewish elders and rabbies, men of chief authority, learning, and influence, against him; and thereupon they, in a tumultuous manner, rushed upon him; and seizing him with violence, immediately carried him before the sanhedrim*, for them to take cognizance of the matter.

14 Of all the ways that I have met with for settling the power of the Jews in criminal cases, none pleases me better than what the elaborate compilers of the *Universal History* have given us, (Vol. iv. p. 256, 257.) where they fix the final departure of the Jewish sceptre, or power, at the conversion of *Cornelius*, the Roman centurion, the first fruits of that of the Gentile world. In support of which they observe, that, according to the just rendering of *Jacob's* prophecy, *Gen. xlix. 10.* which ought to be read, *The sceptre shall not depart, &c. till Shiloh come; and to him the nations be gathered;* it could not be totally removed, till this promised conversion of the Gentiles was in some measure accomplished. It had indeed began to dwindle long before; but there was still some remains left; they were governed by their own laws, their sanhedrim had still a great power, even of life and death: But from this time it was so curtailed and reduced, that no footsteps was to be seen of it.

10 And he, readily embracing that opportunity to vindicate the great doctrines of a risen Saviour, spoke with such judgment and courage, clearness of evidence, and force of reasoning, by the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's promise, (*Luke xxi. 15.*) that they were fairly confuted; and perfectly confounded; being incapable of maintaining their own arguments, or of making any tolerable reply to his.

11 But, instead of submitting to evidence, and rejoicing in the tidings of a Saviour, they were the more enraged to find themselves thus publicly baffled and exposed; and therefore, when they could not support their cause by reasoning, they, as is too common in such cases, betook themselves to violence and falsehood, underhandedly instructing, persuading, and bribing certain men, that had no conscience, to give out a charge of this import, We have heard this doughty disputant vent blasphemies in dishonourable and reproachful reflections on our famous law-giver *Moses*; yea, and on the great God himself.

12 And by this, and such like means, they raised the prejudices, and inflamed the passions of the people, and of the Jewish elders and rabbies, men of chief authority, learning, and influence, against him; and thereupon they, in a tumultuous manner, rushed upon him; and seizing him with violence, immediately carried him before the sanhedrim*, for them to take cognizance of the matter.

31 And And those gentlemen argue from the different procedure of the sanhedrim, who tried, condemned, and executed *Stephen*, by their own authority, about a year after Christ; but, twenty-six years after, they endeavoured to do the same by *Paul*, and were prevented by *Lydas*, the Roman captain, (*Acts. xxi. 27.* &c.) from doing it by their own authority. They afterwards endeavoured to prevail first upon the old, next upon the new governor, to consent to his being put to death, and were refused by both, unless after a fair trial and conviction at the Roman tribunal. And when, at length, they persuaded the new governor to concede in some measure from his prerogative, and let them try the pretended criminal themselves, the apostle protested against it, and appealed to *Cæsar*, as the only tribunal where he could be lawfully tried. This point is further argued from the judgment which *Festus*, *Agrippa*, and others made of him, that he had done nothing worthy of death, &c.

13. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law.

14. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

13. And having false witnesses ready prepared beforehand, fit for their turn, they produced them in court, who, looking at the prisoner, and maliciously putting a strained construction on some of his words, and misrepresenting others, deposed against him in the following manner, This man, who is justly brought as a criminal to your bar, has had the impudence to utter, and to persist in propagating, wherever he came, such scandalous doctrines, as amount to downright blasphemy against this sacred temple, in an apartment of which ye are now sitting, and against our divine law, and consequently against *Moses*, our great law-giver, and against God himself.

14. For we with our own ears have heard him roundly assert, that this Jesus, the contemptible Nazarene, who we all know was crucified, but whom he preaches up to the people, as his risen Lord and Saviour, will utterly destroy this magnificent temple, which is consecrated to God, and will abolish the religious rites and ceremonies, which, by divine appointment, *Moses* delivered in the law, to be observed by us.

15. But as all this, supposing it to be true, was far from any thing like blasphemy, and as, in fact, it afterwards came to pass*, whether *Stephen* at that time was so far inspired, as fully to apprehend it, or not; so God visibly owned and honoured him in like manner as he did *Moses*, when he had been conversing with

NOTES.

Phonias; (chap. xxvi. 31.) as also from the reason which *Festus* gave for not delivering him into their hands, that it was not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before, &c. (chap. xxv. 16.) and from the Jews laying in wait to kill him by stratagem, since they could not get it done in a judicial way. From all these, and such like considerations, those learned writers conclude, that between the death of St. *Stephen* and the trial of St. *Paul*, the Jews had lost all their power of trying criminal causes; and hence this instance of the latter is the first we meet with of their being divested of that power, about twenty years after the conversion of *Cornelius*; it seems to follow, that the Jewish sceptre was not totally departed, till after the *Gentiles* had been gathered to *Sion*.—But the curious and inquisitive reader, that would thoroughly examine this intricate argument, and see how far the Jews continued to have the power of life and death, in matters relating to their own law, may consult the

learned and laboured discourses of Dr. *Lardner*, to restrain it, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, and of Mr. *Bischope*, to establish its full extent, in his sermons at Boyle's Lecture.

* Though from our Lord's own predictions, (*Luke* xxi. 5, 6. and *John* iv. 23, 24.) which, probably, *Stephen* had referred to, he might know that the temple should be destroyed, and a more spiritual sort of worship introduced; yet, since the apostles themselves did not for some time after this know that the ceremonial law should be utterly abolished, it may be a question whether *Stephen* ever spoke in such strong terms as were alleged by these witnesses against him, about the change of the customs delivered by *Moses's* law: or if, by divine suggestion, he spoke words that admitted of such a construction, whether he himself clearly understood their whole meaning, any more than some of the ancient prophets did their own prophecies. (1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.)

with him, and receiving the law from him the second time in the mount: (*Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30.*) And whilst he stood under this heavy charge before the council, all that were sitting there looked intently and earnestly at him, as though they would observe whether there were no tokens of guilt in his aspect; but so far were they from discovering any thing like it, that, on the contrary, they saw a most amiable innocence and cheerfulness, and even an extraordinary miraculous splendor and majesty in his countenance, as if it had been the face of an illustrious angel appearing in human form. (*See Matth. xxviii. 3.*)

RECOLUTIONS.

How unhappy is it that money-matters should occasion murmurings and discord in churches, which, on other accounts, are of one heart and soul! How prudent is it to prevent such occasions, by an impartial application of their liberal contributions to the religious and charitable uses for which they were made! And how needful is the office of deacons for this purpose; and that men of reputable established characters, for good economy and fidelity, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, be appointed to it? But how tender should we be of the rights of churches for choosing their own officers, relating to their secular, as well as spiritual concerns! The apostles themselves would not invade these rights; and yet their directions ought to be followed in the exercise of them. While deacons are to serve tables, the great business of gospel-ministers is to give themselves entirely to the preaching of the word and prayer, that they may labour for the service of souls, in hope that God may make it effectual; and when he is with them, we may well hope that numbers of converts, and even some from among the most unlikely, (such as the bigotted priests of old, will be brought in to the Lord and to his church. But, O how desperately are carnal hearts set against the gospel of Christ; and how perversely apt, to charge his glorious and peculiar doctrines with blasphemy! Ye false professors of religion are its greatest enemies, though they cannot gain say the Spirit of wisdom and power that appears in his servants, and though miracles themselves were to be wrought by them, and God himself were to make their faces shine like an angel's. But woe unto those, who, instead of scripture, reason, and argument, fly to calumny and violence; and either suborn, or suffer themselves to be made, false witnesses against them whom God owns and honours!

C H A P. VII.

Stephen's defence of himself before the Sanhedrim against the blasphemy laid to his charge, on account of what he had said about the change of ceremonial rites, and acceptably worshipping God in one place as well as another, 1,—19. About Moses and his law, 20,—43. And about the destruction of the temple, 44,—50. He applies the discourse to the council and his prosecutors, 51,—53. and is stoned to death, while he was under an extraordinary manifestation of Christ to him, and was praying for his enemies, 54,—60.

TEXT.

THEN said the high priest, Are these things so?

PARAPHRASE.

THE high-priest having heard the charge of blasphemous words, that had been laid against Stephen, and not being sufficiently awed by the wonder-

ful lustre that appeared in his countenance, (*chap. vi. 13, 14, 15.*) went on, as president of the council, to put him upon his trial, saying, Is there any truth in the things deposed against you? What have you to say for yourself? Are you guilty, or not guilty?

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and others, hearken, the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

2 And *Stephen* made a noble defence in the following strong and touching manner: Men, brethren, and fathers, by whom I ought to be treated with humanity, kindness, and tenderness, and whom I would address with sober reasoning and scripture-arguments, with affectionate concern for your happiness, and with all becoming respect, I beg your patience to hear what I have to offer, with serious attention, and without giving me any interruption: As to the charge of blasphemy exhibited against me, (*chap. vi. 14.*) on account of what I have said about the change of ceremonial rites, and acceptably worshipping God in every place, provided it be in spirit and in truth; (*John iv. 21, 23, 24.*) suffer me to lay before you a short history of *Abraham* and the patriarchs, our worthy progenitors: To begin with *Abraham*, from whom we are all descended, and under whom we hold our covenant-privileges, when he lived in an idolatrous country, viz. in *Ur of the Chaldees*, (*Gen. xi. 31. Josh. xxiv. 2, 3. and Neh. ix. 7.*) which lay in *Mesopotamia*, even then, and there it was, that the great and blessed God, whom I adore, but who is exalted above all blessing and praise, and has no need of the homage of any of his creatures, first manifested himself to him in a cloud of glory*, before he came to dwell in *Charran*.

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and

3 And there it was, that this only living and true God opened a door of hope to us, saying to him, (*Gen. xii. 1.*) Arise, and remove your habitation from your native country, and from among your idolatrous

N O T E.

* It is generally thought, with great probability, that this title, *The God of glory*, here refers to the glorious appearance which he made in the *Shechinah*, and from which he spoke to *Abraham*; and it must be supposed, that God now called him to go out from his country and kindred, &c. For we are expressly told, that he brought him out of *Ur of the Chaldees*. (*Gen. xv. 7. and Neh. ix.*) And it is here said, that this was before he dwelt in *Charran*: And when he had been some time there, and, perhaps, thought of settling in that country, which, as well as *Ur of the Chaldees*, is named, by the ancient geography, in *Mesopotamia*, when taken in a larger sense, than in its strictest acceptation, as

including only the parts that are situated between *Euphrates* and *Tygris*, God then probably repeated his order to him to go still further, (*Gen. xii. 1.—5.*) which is called his removing to *Canaan*. (*ver. 4.*) And as this was still reckoned the land of *Mesopotamia*, and his brother *Nabor* came afterwards with his family, and settled there, as appears from *Gen. xxiv. 10, 13.* compared with *chap. xxviii. 2, 10.*; so *Abraham's* leaving that place, and those of his relations that were come thither, but would go no further, might very properly be still called his leaving his country and kindred. See *Bedford's Script. Chron.* p. 312.

and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then came he, out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell.

5 And at his first bringing him into this country, he gave him no present possession here, by way of inheritance, no, not so much as (ἀμφοτέρω) a man's stride, or a foot's breadth; so that he was afterward obliged to contract with the sons of *Heib* for the property of a burying ground when his wife died (*Gen. xxiii. 2,—16.*) Nevertheless, God then made over the whole land to him by way of free promise as a possession that should be actually enjoyed by his offspring in after generations, and that at a time when he had no child.

6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and intreat them evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And at the expiration of that term, I, *God*, will bring severe and heavy judgments upon that very people who had long oppressed them; and thereupon your seed shall be delivered out of the house of bondage, and shall worship me, with freedom and delight, in this promised land. Now this is an humbling admonition to us of the meaning of our original; and should be a caution to us, to

NOTE

* See *Whitby* on the place, and *Bedford's Script. Chronol.* p. 294. for computations to support the sense given in the Paraphrase.

we do not provoke God to cast us off, and turn us out of possession of this land again: And it is a plain evidence, that there was originally no distinction of places, to which God confined his favour, but that he freely manifested himself to our great father Abraham, and accepted his and his offsprings faith, worship, and obedience, while they sojourned in a strange land; and that his regard to Canaan itself, and his giving it to them and us, had a principal reference to the heavenly inheritance, of which that was a type, and which we ought to be most of all concerned about.

8 And as to the change of rites and ceremonies, (*chap. vi. 14.*) be pleased to observe, that God having made his covenant of free favour with Abraham and his seed, he afterwards, for the confirmation of his faith, annexed to it the famous rite of circumcision, (*Gen. xvii. 7,—10.*) as an external badge, sign, and seal of his covenant, and of the peculiar relation into which they were thereby taken to God, as their God: Accordingly when, after all this, Isaac, the son of the promise, was born to Abraham, he circumcised him on the eighth day in obedience to God's command: (*Gen. xxi. 2,—4.*) And as this was a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had being yet uncircumcised, (*Rom. iv. 10, 11.*) it shews that he was as much accepted of God before, as after this religious ceremony was instituted, and that there is no intrinsic worth in this, or any positive rite, which God may alter at pleasure: And henceforth the promised seed begun to multiply under the entail of the covenant; so that Isaac begat Jacob, who was the father of the twelve heads of our tribes.

9 And this leads me to take notice of the state of things, with regard to these twelve patriarchs, how they served God, and were owned of him, in a strange land, and how he accomplished his word concerning them, Ye all know that Joseph was one of them; and God having revealed to him in dreams, that he should be raised to dignity and honour above all the rest of his family, his brethren, being envious at him on this account, took an opportunity of selling him to the Midianites, to prevent his exaltation; and they carrying him to Egypt, sold him into slavery there; (*Gen. xxxvii. 5,—36.*) but whilst he was in that foreign and idolatrous country, God was remarkably with him, by his Spirit, favour, and blessing. (*Gen. xxxix. 2, 31.*)

10 And, by surprising turns of providence, he set him at liberty from imprisonment, and every other calamity that at first beset him there; and endued him

to And deliver-
him out of all
his

his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house,

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, three score and fifteen souls.

him with such extraordinary knowledge and prudence, as highly recommended him to the esteem of Pharaoh, the king of that land; insomuch that he made him prime minister of state, committing the government of all Egypt, and the affairs of his own household, entirely to his management; (*Gen. xli. 38,—44, and xlv. 8.*) God over-ruling all this, to form an eminent type of the exaltation of Christ in his mediatorial office, after he had been abused and crucified by those who have acted an invidious part against our great Lord, as Joseph's brethren did against him.

11 Now after Joseph was thus advanced, and had laid up great stores of corn, out of the increase of seven years of plenty, there was, according to his prediction, an universal famine through all Egypt, and the countries round about, including the land of Canaan; so that it was a time of extreme distress, and the rest of the heads of our tribes, from whom a numerous seed, and among them the Messiah himself was to descend, were in danger of perishing for want of food to sustain them; (*Gen. xli. 46,—57.*) and so residing in this land is no security against the worst calamities.

12 But their father Jacob being then living, and having heard that there was abundance of corn to be sold in Egypt, he first sent all his sons, even our ancestors, that were with him (except his beloved young Benjamin) to buy and bring home provisions for himself and family. (*Gen. xlii. 1,—4.*)

13 And upon their returning all loaded with corn, except Simeon, who was detained as an hostage in Egypt, for Benjamin's going back with them, (*Gen. xlii. 19, 20, 24.*) Jacob sent them, with him, a second time on the same errand: And Joseph, having then got all his brethren with him, discovered himself in the most moving manner to them; and it was presently known to Pharaoh, and all his court, that they were his brethren, and of what family they were. (*Gen. xlv. 3,—16.*)

14 Then Joseph, with the entire approbation, and by the order of Pharaoh, (*Gen. xlv. 16,—24.*) sent for his father Jacob, that he, and all the rest of his relations might come to him, amounting, in the whole, to the number * of seventy-five persons, ex-

N O T E.

* It is to be observed that Stephen, following the version of the *Seventy*, speaks of Joseph's kindred at large, (*ἡλικία πάντων*) whereas *Moses* speaks strictly of them only that came out of Jacob's loins, which, besides his sons

wives, were sixty-six, (*Gen. xli. 26.*) and then adding Jacob and Joseph with his two sons that were born in Egypt, calls them seventy souls which came out to Egypt, (*ver. 27.*) But if we leave out these four, and if, Judah's wife

clusive of *Jacob*, but inclusive of wives and children.

15. So *Jacob* went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers,

15 So *Jacob* hearing with wonder and joy, and being fully convinced that his son *Joseph* was alive, and was governor over all the land of Egypt, (*Gen. xlv. 26, 27, 28.*) took his journey with his whole family thither; and both he and all the patriarchs, our fathers, continued there till their death.

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that *Abraham* bought for a sum of money of the sons of *Emmor*, the father of *Sychem*.

16 And as they all died with faith in the promises of the land of *Canaan*, and of a resurrection to the heavenly country, of which that land was a type; they desired to be, and accordingly were, buried in *Canaan*. For as *Jacob*, according to his own express order, was buried in the cave of *Machpelah*, which *Abraham* bought of *Ephron* the *Hittite*; (*Gen. xlv. 29, 30, 31. and 1. 13.*) so * our fathers, from whom the twelve tribes of *Israel* respectively sprung, were carried over to *Sychem*, and buried in the sepulchre, which † *Jacob*, one of *Abraham*'s famous descendants, purchased, together with a parcel of ground, of the sons of *Hamor*, the father of *Sychem*, for an hundred pieces of silver, and which became the inheritance of the children of *Joseph*, (*Josh. xxiv. 32.*) whose bones were buried there, in consequence of the oath he had taken from the children

NOTES

ing dead, (*Gen. xxxviii. 12.*) and young *Benjamin* being supposed to be as yet unmarried, we add the two wives of *Joseph*'s brethren, which were sent for, and went into Egypt, (*Gen. xlv. 26. and xlv. 27.*) the whole number of his kindred, besides his father *Jacob*, who is here reckoned a part, were seventy-five, which *Stephen* says *Joseph* called to him. This seems to be a more easy and obvious way of reconciling the difference between these accounts than any I have met with: Others may be consulted in *Whitby* on this text, and *Beisford's Script. Chron.* p. 357, 358, and *Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 45. But whether any of them entirely clear the text from all difficulty or not, it does not affect any important article of the Christian faith or practice, or the defence which *Stephen* made of himself, in a citation of some approved record then extant.

* *Stephen* may be supposed to have passed over the burial of *Jacob*, (though to make the history more complete, I have put it into the Paraphrase) and seems to have spoke only of the interment of the twelve patriarchs, who were mentioned under the title of their fa-

thers, and who, dying in the same faith with *Jacob* and *Joseph*, were probably carried to *Sychem*, and buried by *Moses* thither with the bones of *Joseph*. (*Exod. xiii. 19.*) And *Jerome* speaks of *Rachel*'s having passed through *Sychem*, and seen, in her way from thence, the sepulchre of the twelve patriarchs. Vid. *Epitaph. Paulæ. epist. 17.*

† An ellipsis are very frequent both in the language of the Old and New Testament, (see several instances alledged by *Whitby* on this place) and father or son were often to be supplied, an example of which we have in this very verse, where (*Ἰσαακ τοῦ πατρὸς*) *Emmor* of *Sychem*, signifies *Emmor*, the father of *Sychem*; and as *Rachel*'s descendants were called *Rachel*, (*Mat. ii. 18.*) so, in the like elliptical way, *Abraham* might here be put for, and by them that familiarly knew the history, might easily be understood to signify *Jacob*, who was one of the posterity of *Abraham*, and purchased this burying-place as a pledge of the inheritance of all this land which was promised to *Abraham*, and in faith that God would, in due time, perform his promise to him.

children of *Israel* for that purpose. (*Gen.* i. 24, 25.) And so, though they lived and died in a foreign country, and never got possession of *Palestine*, they were nevertheless accepted of God, and their faith was carried out to the heavenly inheritance, which Jesus has brought to light, and has obtained for all that believe in him.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew, and multiplied in Egypt;

18 Till another king arose which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil intreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

20 This Egyptian king, fearing lest our nation and family (to *you*, *quoniam*) should grow too numerous, rich, and powerful, laid artful schemes, both to oppress and extirpate them; (*Exod.* i. 9, 10.) according to which he dealt cruelly with our ancestors, not only by making their lives bitter with hard bondage, and rigorous exactions and services, (*Exod.* i. 11, 14.) but even by ordering their helpless male infants to be exposed to the utmost danger, or to be killed in the birth, to the end that none of them might be preserved alive, to keep up a succession in after-ages; (*Exod.* i. 15, 16.) he therein acting against our infant nation, as ye have done against Jesus, and the infant-state of his church, by your endeavours to suppress

17 But as God is ever mindful of his covenant; so when the four hundred years, (*ver.* 6.) were drawing toward their period, and the time was coming on which he had prefixed for fulfilling the gracious promise he had made, and confirmed by oath to Abraham, (*Gen.* xxii. 16, 17, 18.) the children of *Israel* were so wonderfully owned and blessed there, that they were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land of *Egypt* was filled with them: (*Exod.* i. 7.)

18 Till, in process of time, the government being transferred to another family, and this generation worn out, (*Exod.* i. 6, 8.) a tyrannical prince came to the throne, who ungenerously and ungratefully forgot all the good offices that Joseph had done to raise the honour and riches of the kingdom, and save it from perishing by famine; and who paid no regard to the memory of this great benefactor, or to his countrymen for his sake.

19 This Egyptian king, fearing lest our nation and family (to *you*, *quoniam*) should grow too numerous, rich, and powerful, laid artful schemes, both to oppress and extirpate them; (*Exod.* i. 9, 10.) according to which he dealt cruelly with our ancestors, not only by making their lives bitter with hard bondage, and rigorous exactions and services, (*Exod.* i. 11, 14.) but even by ordering their helpless male infants to be exposed to the utmost danger, or to be killed in the birth, to the end that none of them might be preserved alive, to keep up a succession in after-ages; (*Exod.* i. 15, 16.) he therein acting against our infant nation, as ye have done against Jesus, and the infant-state of his church, by your endeavours to suppress

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22 And we are told, that the king, which knew not Joseph, was a foreigner, who with a numerous army, some say of *Affricans*, others of *Phenicians*, others of *Arabians*, and others of the *Horims*, whom the children of *Esaú* drove out of their land, (*Deut.* ii. 12, 22.) invaded and conquered *Egypt*, and called themselves *pastors* or *shepherds*. See *Shuckard's* hist. Vol. II. p. 26, — 210.

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suppress them, though all in this case, as it was in that, will prove to be in vain.

20 But, to go on to another part of the charge against me, for having spoken against *Moses* and *the law*, (*chap. vi. 11, 13, 14.*) As to *Moses*, I adore the infinitely wise, holy, and over-ruling providence of God, in raising up that great deliverer to *Israel*, who was an eminent type of Jesus, our still more glorious Saviour; and of *Moses*, I with pleasure observe, that it was in the forementioned perilous days of our father's oppression in *Egypt*, that he was born, who was indeed an exceeding beautiful child, amiable in the sight of God, (*actus reus*) as well as comely in the eyes of men; and as God had designed him for eminent services, he was wonderfully preserved, his parents having concealed, and brought him up for three months in their own house, not fearing the commandment of the king, (*Exod. ii. 2. and Heb.*

xi. 23.) And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him as her own son. 21 And when they began to think that it might be dangerous to keep him any longer at home, and his mother thereupon committing him to divine protection, exposed him in a basket of bulrushes, reeds, or wicker, on the bank of the river *Nile*; Pharaoh's daughter, by a special kind providence, came that way, and seeing the pretty babe, her compassion was moved towards him; and she took care of him, and put him, though unknowingly, to his own mother to nurse; and provided for him, as if he had been her own son. (*Exod. ii. 5, 10.*)

22 And as *Moses* grew up, she gave him all the advantages of a polite education; so that he was well versed in all the learning of the *Egyptians**, who were some of the most famous people of that age, for astronomy and other parts of literature: And he was so great a genius, and so endued with the Spirit of God, that though he humbly owned, that he had not a fluency of expression, (*Exod. iv. 10.*) yet he all along was remarkably eminent for a judicious, close, and nervous way of speaking, and for managing all affairs with prudence, and courage, and great success, that came before him, whether human or divine; and when he was called to be a prophet and law-giver, such was the extraordinary inspiration and influence which he had from God, and such his immediate converse with him, that his laws and administration were divinely wise and authoritative, and were

NOTE

* That the *Egyptians* were in great esteem for human knowledge, in after-times, appears from the high encomium given of Solomon's wisdom, that it excelled all the wisdom of *Egypt*, 1 Kings iv. 30.

were confirmed by abundance of undoubted miracles: So that I esteem *Moses* to have been the most eminent figure of Christ that ever was, in the danger that attended his infancy, in the special care that God took of him, in his excellent qualifications, in the divine authority of his office and laws, in his miraculous way of confirming them, and in the intimacy of his acquaintance with God.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of *Israel*.

23 As an introduction to what providence had further designed him for, when he arrived to the full age of forty years *, and was at the highest pitch of grandeur in *Pharaoh's* court, his own affection, and a divine impulse, inclined his heart to go and acquaint himself with the persons and hardships of the children of *Israel*, his kinsmen, according to the flesh, and heirs, together with him, of God's promise to *Abraham* and his seed; and to try what might be done for their relief.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

24 And as a specimen of the authority which God had begun to give, and would more evidently and fully confer upon him; he observing one of them (*adversarius*) to be unrighteously and barbarously abused, and beaten by an *Egyptian*, was so moved with compassion and holy indignation, as to interpose for his assistance and rescue: And to vindicate the life and liberty of his innocent and oppressed brother, and do him justice against his cruel adversary, he gave the *Egyptian* a mortal wound, (*Exod. ii. 11, 12.*) without the least apprehension of any *Israelite's* being offended at it.

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not.

25 For knowing in himself, that he had a divine suggestion for what he had done, and supposing that they must needs know something of the extraordinary providences, which had appeared for his preservation and advancement, of the reputation he had obtained for wisdom and conduct, and of the time's drawing nigh, at which God had promised to judge the nation that oppressed them, (*ver. 6, 7.*) he reasonably thought, that by performing this public and heroic act of kindness to them, and justice against their oppressors, they, who were his own countrymen and brethren in the faith, would have been led to conclude, that God intended to make use of him, as a means and instrument of delivering them out of their grievous bondage: But so great was their stupidity

N O T E.

* *Moses* is spoken of by *Jewish* writers, as adopted by *Thermuthis*, *Pharaoh's* daughter, for her son, as a man of great eminence among the *Egyptians*, as general of their armies, and as designed by *Pharaoh* himself for their king. See *Bedford's Chronol.* p. 373, —375. and *Shuckford's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 330.

pidity, that they did not take these plain hints, nor understand or reflect upon their meaning.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?

26 And that he might act the part of a judge, as well as of a deliverer, and thereby give them an earnest of what might be further expected from him, he on the following day appeared among them again, and going up to two of them, that were quarrelling and fighting, (*μαχεσσομεν*) one with another, he attempted to put an end to the fray, and make peace between them, saying, with an air of authority, affection, and respect, Sirs, do ye not consider that ye are kindred by birth and religion, who should love as brethren, and, being surrounded with malicious and potent enemies, should be the more united among yourselves? Why then do ye act so much out of character, and so contrary to your own interest, safety, and comfort, as to fall out with, and injure, and beat one another? (*Exod. ii. 13.*) Pray let me neither see, nor hear any more of such uncharitable and mischievous contentions and outrages among you.

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

27 But he that had been most to blame in the skirmish with his neighbour, being impatient of reproof, turned short upon this kind and impartial peace-maker, and rejecting his motion with indignation, reproaches, and scorn, said to him with a taunt, Pray who are you, that you take so much upon you? What business have you to trouble yourself with us, and to assume the authority of a governor over us, or of a judge in our cause?

28 Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

28 What! have you a mind to murder me at your own arbitrary will and pleasure, just as you did the poor Egyptian, no longer ago than yesterday? (*Exod. ii. 14.*) He therein acting with the same malignant spirit against our famous deliverer and law-giver, as the scribes and Pharisees have against Jesus, the Saviour and the Prince of peace, and his followers.

29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

29 Then Moses being alarmed and frightened, through the present weakness of his faith, at this clamorous speech, and finding that his killing the Egyptian was known, and had reached Pharaoh's ears, who thereupon resolved to put him to death, (*Exod. ii. 14, 15.*) he immediately hastened out of Egypt into the land of Midian, where he married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, who was also called Reuel, and was a great man, no less than the priest or prince of that country; and there Moses sojourned as a stranger, till he had two sons, viz. Gershom and Eliezer, by his wife. (*Exod. ii. 16,—22. and iii. 1. and xviii. 2, 3, 4.*)

30 And when forty years were expired,

30 But when he had spent forty years in retirement to these parts, the set time was come for God to

expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina, an angel of the Lord, in a flame of fire, in a bush.

When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and, as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and, as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

to put the highest honour upon him, though he was then in a strange land: For as he was one day looking after his father-in-law *Jethro's* flock, on the backside of the wilderness of *Sinai*, near the mount which bore that name, and was likewise called mount *Horeb*, (*Exod. iii. 1.*) the angel or messenger of the covenant, (*Mal. iii. 1.* see the note on *ver. 38.*) who was expressly styled *the Lord*, and said of himself, I am the God of your fathers, (*ver. 31, 32.*) and was no other than *Jesus the Son of God*; this increased angel appeared to him in a cloud of glory, like a flame of fire, which was a token of the divine presence, and of its majesty, power, and purity, and was seen in the midst of a certain bush without consuming it, as an emblem of the preservation of the church, while God is present with it, though it then was, as it now is, in the midst of fiery trials.

31 Upon *Moses's* seeing this, he wondered greatly in himself at such an extraordinary and unaccountable appearance; and as he was advancing towards it, to take a more curious and critical survey, the voice of the Lord, who then so visibly dwelt in the bush, directed itself to him,

32 Saying, I, who make this luminous representation of my glory, am the true *Jehovah*, the God that made my covenant with your fathers, and have taken them and their seed into special relation to myself; I am still the same as I was, the God of *Abraham*, with whom I first made my covenant, and confirmed it with an oath; (*Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.*) and the God of *Isaac*, to whom I renewed it; (*chap. xxvi. 2, 3, 4.*) and the God of *Jacob*, with whom I established it, (*chap. xxviii. 13, 14, 15.*) and began, in a remarkable manner to fulfil it, by making him the father of the twelve heads of all the tribes of *Israel*, that are to inherit the land of *Canaan*; and I am now thy God to be with thee, and perform my promises by thee: At the hearing of this, *Moses*, though so great, so good, and holy a man, was struck with such an awful sense of the immediate presence of the Divine Majesty, that he veiled his face, and was afraid any longer to look at this illustrious representation of it. (*Exod. iii. 6.*)

33 Then the Lord said to him, Take your shoes from off your feet, in token of holy caution and circumspection, profound reverence and humility, in your approaches to me; of all submission to my authority, and readiness to do my will; and of cleansing and departure from all the defilements of your walk and conversation: For, by means of my visible and immediate presence here, the place where you now stand

stand is, for the time being, relatively holy ground, (*Exod. iii. 5.*) though it be not within the confines of the promised land, to which I am now about to bring my people *Israel* by thine hand.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

34 I have certainly, carefully and compassionately observed the various distresses that my own covenant-people have suffered under *Egyptian* slavery; and mine ears have been open to all their mournful complaints and earnest prayers; and am now come, in manifestations of my wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness, according to my appointed and promised time, to set them at liberty from their sore bondage. And as you have formerly shewn your concern for them, and been ready to take their part against their oppressors, (*ver. 24.*) Come now, and enter with all cheerfulness and authority from me, on the important work for which I design you; I'll send you now, without delay, into *Egypt*, and will be with you, to make you the great instrument of their deliverance. (*Exod. iii. 9, 10.*)

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

35 So different were God's thoughts from theirs, that this famous *Moses*, whom they rejected with scorn, saying, *Who made thee a ruler and a judge?* when he was acting a most righteous and friendly part toward them, (*ver. 26, 27.*) This very man did God, in the greatness of his mercy, thus remarkably authorize, assist, and own, to make him their conductor, governor, and deliverer, by the immediate commission, and the attending guidance, power, and protection of the Angel of the covenant, who appeared to him as a divine person in the flaming bush. (*ver. 30, 31, 32.*) And just in this manner has God raised up his Son Jesus to be a spiritual Saviour to you of this age, to guide and govern you, and to bring in a more valuable deliverance from sin and wrath, though ye have treated him with contempt, and rejected his authority as the great prophet and king of the church.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

36 *Moses* accordingly went with all cheerfulness to save our fathers, notwithstanding the former abuses he had met with from them; and, under the supernatural influence of this angel, brought them out of the house of bondage, after he had done a great many miracles, which were signs of his divine mission, in the land of *Egypt*; and he furthermore wrought wonderful works in dividing the Red sea to complete their deliverance, and in the destruction of *Pharaoh*, and all his host; and continued to perform many other miraculous deeds for forty years afterwards in the wilderness, to settle their church-state, and to shew that God was still with him. So great a man was he, so highly honoured of God, and so glorious

an instrument in his hand, that his memory ought to be dear and sacred amongst us: But yet, according to his own acknowledgment, he is not to be equalled to Jesus the Son of God, who then appeared to him as coming down, under the character of the Angel of the Lord, to deliver his people from *Egyptian* bondage, and thereby prefigured his coming to dwell in flesh without consuming it, that he might save *Israel* from all their iniquities.

37 This is that Moses which said unto the children of *Israel*. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

37 This *Moses* himself is he that delivered a memorable prediction of the Messiah, (see the paraphrase and note on *chap.* iii. 22.) saying to the children of *Israel*, The Lord, your covenant-God, will hereafter raise up to your nation, from the loins of your posterity, another eminent prophet, as he has me, (*Acts* i. 32) who have the honour of being a signal type of his superior wisdom and authority, office and efficacy, as a Prince and Saviour, and the high favourite and privy-counsellor of heaven: I turn you over to him, charging you, in the name of God, to listen to, and obey the voice of his word, whatsoever alterations he may see fit to make in my laws. *This shews that we are not to rest in Moses's laws, nor to imagine that its ceremonial rites and customs are never to be changed; but that we really honour and obey this great lawgiver himself, by submitting to Christ's authority in setting them aside, and introducing a more spiritual dispensation.*

38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount *Sina*, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

38 This *Moses* furthermore is he, who was, as a prophet and ruler, captain and leader, in the *Israelitish* church, during its abode in the wilderness; and was with the Angel of the covenant, even the Son of God *, their *Jehovab*, (*Exod.* xix. 3, 9, 10, &c. and xx. 2.) who spake to him, and by him to our fathers at mount *Sinai*, in a familiar manner, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend: (*Exod.* xxxiii. 11. and *Deut.* v. 2, 3, 4.) And he had the honour of receiving and communicating to them, to be handed down to us of this age, the authoritative and infallible doctrines, commands, and promises, which were given him immediately by the living God, to direct them in the way of life †, and which, being

N O T E S.

* He who spake to *Moses* at mount *Sinai*, expressly called himself, and is styled *Jehovab*; a name, which cannot without the highest presumption, be assumed by, or applied to, any created angel, on account of his personating God, since he whose name alone is *Jehovah*, is the Most High over all the earth. (*Psal.* lxxxiii. 18.) And therefore it seems to

me, that it was the Son of God, who delivered the law to *Moses* under the character of *Jehovab*, and is here spoken of as the Angel of the covenant, relative to his mediatorial office. See the note on *John* v. 37.

† Though the law itself could not give life, as the apostle tells us, (*Gal.* iii. 21.) yet as the ceremonial law pointed to Christ,

ing animated by his Spirit, were the means of conveying spiritual life to them.

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

39 But though he was so great a man in his office and endowments, (*ver. 36.*) and had such plain tokens of God's being with him, yet our forefathers dealt with him in the like ungrateful and disobedient manner as ye have with the Messiah himself: So perverse were they, that they would not submit to his authority, but rejected him and his government with indignation and contempt; and their foolish and wicked hearts were inclined to return back to *Egypt*, and even to its idolatry and their former hardships there, rather than, under his conduct, to feed on manna in the wilderness, and go forward in the good ways of God to a land that flowed with milk and honey.

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

40 Accordingly, toward the close of the forty days of *Moses's* being, a second time, in the mount with God, (*Exod. xxiv. 18. and xxxii. 1.*) they, in a discontented, mutinous, and rebellious manner, said to *Aaron*, Make us a representation of God, like those that the *Egyptians* have of theirs, that we may have some visible sign of his presence to march before us, and conduct us to the promised land: For as to this man *Moses*, of whom we have had too high thoughts, and whom we followed out of *Egypt*, we cannot imagine what is become of him, nor do we expect ever to see him, or have his guidance more.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

41 And as the *Egyptians* represented their god *Apis* by the image of an ox or calf; so our fathers, in those days of their stupidity and unbelief, prevailed with *Aaron*, by their furious clamours, which threw him into an unguarded confusion and surprise, to make one in the likeness of a calf, as a symbol of the divine presence; and immediately thereupon, in direct contradiction to the second commandment against image-worship, which they had so lately received, in the most tremendous manner, from mount *Sinai*, (*Exod. xx. 4, 5, 23.*) they, through the strong propension which they had contracted to idolatry in *Egypt*, offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, in a way of religious worship, to this idol of their own setting up; and expressed their joy in feasting, shouting, and dancing before it, (*Exod. xxxii. 6, 17, 18, 19.*) as if it had been really a God, which they themselves had so newly made, by their own artificers hands.

M 2

42, 43 Then

N O T E.

Christ, it was a means of life to *Israel*, and became effectual, under the light and influence of the Spirit of God, for their obtaining it through faith in the

Messiah who was to come: And *Israel's* obedience to the law was the means of their enjoying a happy life in *Canaan*, *Deut. xxxii. 47.*

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts, and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan; figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

42, 43 Then God was so highly incensed, that he changed the method of his dealings with them; and withdrawing the restraints of his Spirit and grace, gave them up in his righteous judgment, as a just punishment of their sin, to the wilful sottish corruptions of their own hearts; (*Psalms* lxxxii. 12.) so that they proceeded still further to acts of the grossest idolatry, in direct contradiction to the *first* commandment, (*Exod.* xx. 2.) by worshipping the luminaries of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, (*Deut.* xvii. 3.) the very idol-gods that the *Egyptians* adored, as the Lord complained by one of the ancient prophets, saying, (*Amos* v. 25, 26, 27.) O ye *Israelites* were all your national offerings of slain beasts and other sacrifices only to me? or shall I accept your services, wherein ye falsely pretended to honour me, during your journeyings forty years in the wilderness? Ye did not these things to me: Nay, so far were ye from glorifying me as God, that ye fell into heathen idolatry, and took upon your shoulders, and carried about with you, one little tabernacle, repository, or shrine, in which was inclosed the image of *Moloch*, the idol of the children of *Ammon* *. (*1 Kings* xi. 7.) And, in another shrine, ye carried with you the figure of a *star*, representing your idol *Remphan*; and paid your religious adorations to these false gods, by the images which ye yourselves had made: And as ye are not yet clear of this abominable idolatry, I will certainly punish your iniquity by delivering you up into the hands of your enemies, who will carry you away from your own country into a strange and idolatrous land, even into *Affyria*, (*2 Kings* xvii. 5,—8.) which lies beyond *Damascus* and *Babylon*. Thus God righteously dealt with them for corrupting

but

N O T E.

* As the sun and moon were worshipped by the eastern nations under the character of the king and queen of heaven, and were the *Osiris* and *Apis* of the *Egyptians*; the first of which they represented by a golden bull, and the second by a living ox: The learned generally agree, that by *Moloch* was meant the *sun*, which was at other times called *Baal*, *Bel*, and *Belus*; and, in the opinion of some, the star *Remphan*, which was also called *Thinn*, and, by the Seventy, *Rephan*, or *Remphan*, (*Amos* v. 26.) signified the *moon*; but others think it rather signified *Saturn*. The curious reader may meet with large collections of the sense of the ancients about these idols in *Grotius*, *Bochart*, *Hammond*, *Lightfoot*, and *Whitby*. But Mr. *Shuck-*

ford has, with great probability, shewn, that the *Egyptians* at first worshipped these gods only as mediators, in whose names they worshipped the true God; and that the dispute between *Abraham* and their priests lay in this, Whether God should be worshipped in the names of these mediators, or in the name of that *Yehovah*, who appeared to him under this title, which was known to be the name of the supreme God in all nations, in early times; and that, accordingly, *Calling upon the name of the Lord*, should be rendered, *Invoking in the name of the Lord*. (*Gen.* xii. 7. 8. and xxvii. 24, 25.) See his *Connect. of sacr. and prof. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 133,—135. and 373,—399.

his worship, and despising his law: And shall be not deal as severely with you, the children of these your provoking ancestors, for the contempt ye have put upon his Christ, and for rejecting the counsel of God against yourselves in this new dispensation of grace, in which he, with divine authority, has made such alterations in worship as seemed best in his sight?

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

44 As to the remaining part of the charge brought against me, relating to the *destruction of the temple*, (*chap. vi. 14.*) he pleased to consider, that though our forefathers acceptably worshipped God for many ages before, as has been already suggested, (*ver. 2,—16.*) yet it was not till they came into the wilderness, which lay without the confines of *Judea*, that they were favoured with his holy tabernacle, in which were contained the ark with the two tables of the law, as a witness between God and them, and in which he gave other signal testimonies of his special presence and favour, and bore witness, in a figurative way, of good things that were to come; (*Heb. ix. 9.* and *x. 1.*) such as God's personally dwelling in flesh by the incarnation of Christ, (*John i. 14.*) and his spiritual and gracious residence in the gospel-church as his temple. (*2 Cor. vi. 16.*) And, with a view to heavenly things, (*Heb. viii. 5.*) that tabernacle was framed according to God's own appointment, who gave a strict charge to *Moses* saying, *See that thou make all things after their pattern, or model, which was shewed thee in the mount.* (*Exod. xxv. 40.*)

45 Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David:

45 And afterwards, in the following generation, under the conduct of *Joshua*, whose name in *Greek*, is *Jesus*, and who, in fighting *Israel's* battles, and leading them to the promised land, and introducing the tabernacle among the *Gentiles*, was a type of Jesus Christ, the great and gospel Saviour; our fathers brought that holy tabernacle into the land of *Canaan*, which was then, and had been for many ages, possessed by the idolatrous heathens, whom God devoted to destruction, and expelled before our ancestors: And this place of their solemn worship, and of God's peculiar residence and manifestation of himself, continued among them, without any hint or notion of a fixed temple, for above four hundred years, till the time of king *David*:

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

46 Who was highly in favour with God, as a man after his own heart, in the main of his character, (*chap. xiii. 22.*) and was very desirous to shew his zeal for the honour of God, by building a magnificent temple, as a fixed habitation for the mighty God

God of Jacob *, in which all the worship of the tabernacle might be performed to him. (*Psalms* cxxxii, 4, 5.)

47 But Solomon built him an house.

47 But though God graciously accepted this pious intention of his heart; yet, to shew that he was not in haste for such a house, and laid no stress upon it, as necessary to his service, he would not permit David to do any thing more towards it, than preparing materials for it, (1 *Chron.* xxix. 1, &c.) merely because he had spent most of his time in war; and so God deferred the building of that stately edifice to the more peaceful and settled days of king Solomon his son, (2 *Sam.* vii. 5,—13.) who began to erect it in the fourth year of his reign, four hundred and eighty years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. (1 *Kings* vi. 1.) And so it evidently appears by all this, that the special presence and blessing of God may be enjoyed, and he may be acceptably worshipped, wherever he pleases; that if Solomon might change the moveable tabernacle into a fixed temple by God's appointment, he himself may make the church his spiritual temple, instead of continuing to dwell in one of earthly materials; and that if he refused David's building a house for him, because he had shed so much blood in war, it is much more to be expected that he should take it away from you, who have murdered the Messiah, David's son, whom he owned to be also his Lord, (*Psalms* cx, 1.)

48 Howbeit, the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

48 And though the tabernacle first, and afterwards the temple, was built by God's own appointment, it must nevertheless be allowed, that the presence and favour of the great and glorious God, who is exalted, in his own nature and perfections, above all blessing and praise, are not to be confined to any material temple made with hands, as Solomon himself confessed, saying, with adoring wonder, (1 *Kings* viii. 27.) *Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?* and, as one of the ancient prophets has declared, with a view to God's dwelling in humble souls, and even among the *Gentiles* in New Testament-times, and his rejecting the oblations that were offered by wicked men, even at his own house, (*Isa.* lxvi. 2,—13.) saying, (*ver.* 1, 2.)

49 Thus

N O T E.

* The temple seems to be here called a tabernacle, because it came in the room of the tabernacle, had the same sacred furniture and emblems of the Di-

vine Presence, served the same religious purposes, and had all tabernacle-service performed in it.

49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

49 Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is the throne of my majesty and dominion, where I have a most complacent rest in the brightest displays of my glory; and the earth is my footstool, where I am essentially present, and in lower degrees manifest my wisdom and power, goodness and government; and in all the parts of which I demand that its inhabitants worship me with the most profound humility and reverence: How then can I need, or be profited by, or confined to, any house that ye shall build for me? or where can any place be found, that shall restrain my favour and delight, or the homage that is to be paid to me?

50 For as I was infinitely blessed and glorious in myself, before the heavens, or the earth, or any thing in them, was formed; so am not I the Creator of all these things, and intimately present in the whole world, as my temple to receive solemn adorations, and to exert and manifest my free favour and almighty power, wherever, and in whatsoever manner, seems good in my sight? *It is therefore no dishonour to God, or disparagement to the temple, to say, that the time is at hand, in which offerings shall be no longer made acceptable by being presented there; but that he will have a gracious regard to all that worship him in spirit and truth, wherever they be, (John iv. 21, 23, 24.) and that the Gentiles shall see the glory of the Lord, (Isa. xxxv. 2.) and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. (Psalm lxvii. 7.)*

51 Many other thoughts might be added in vindication of any thing I have said, had ye patience to hear them; but, to bring all home to your own consciences, ye are a most perversely obstinate, hardened, and unyielding generation, who, through your desperate pride and prejudices, will not bow to the sceptre of divine authority and grace; and how much soever ye glory in the circumcision of your flesh, ye will not devote yourselves to God, or stand to your engagements to be his; but are under the dominion of such irregular, strong passions, as corrupt your hearts, and make you turn a deaf ear to the voice of God in his word and providence: Yea, ye fight against the conviction of your own consciences, and the evidence of miracles, and of the fulfilment of the plainest prophecies of the Messiah, which were wrote by the Holy Spirit, whom ye also oppose and reject, as speaking in, and by us, the inspired servants of Christ: Ye tread exactly in the steps of the wickedest of your forefathers, and are as stubborn and rebellious as any of them; nay, ye go beyond the very worst of them.

52 Which

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven,

52 Which of the former prophets of the Lord have not some of your ancestors, and your predecessors in power and authority, violently persecuted? They have gone so far, as to put them to death, that foretold the coming of the great Messiah, who, on account of the purity of his divine nature, and of his spotless conception, holy life, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness, in his human nature, may be styled by way of eminence, *the just One*: And ye have so far exceeded them in guilt, that, when this Divine Person himself appeared among you, ye hired Judas to betray him, and then unjustly condemned him, and, with a traitorous intention, delivered him up to the Roman power, and maliciously insisted on his being crucified, though the sacred tabernacle and temple, and various ceremonial rites for purification, were typical of him, and ought to have been given up for him by you,

53 Who have received God's holy law, which was delivered to our fathers with the most awful solemnity, (*us διαταγας αγγελων*) amidst troops of attending angels, (*Psal. lxxviii. 17. and Deut. xxxiii. 2.*) and by their ministration in forming the thunderings and lightnings, the sound of the trumpet, and the articulate voice at mount Sinai; and yet ye, like them, have neglected and disregarded this law, and the still more glorious gospel of salvation, which has been published to you, first by the Son of God himself, and afterwards by the Holy Ghost, with the noise of a mighty rushing wind, and by his miraculous gift of tongues, (*chap. ii. 2, 3, 4.*) How then can ye, without repentance, expect to escape God's righteous vengeance? (*Heb. ii. 2, 3.*)

54 As Stephen was thus going on with his discourse, and applying it in so close and touching a manner to the council, they were so stung and pierced with it, that their hearts were cut through, as if they had been sawn asunder, (*διεπριοντο ταις καρδιαις αυτων*) by tormenting indignation and envy; at what they could neither bear, nor refute; and, looking at him, they grinned and snarled, and gnashed their teeth, in token of their intolerable vexation, and of their bitterness and rage against him, instead of receiving an ingenuous conviction of their sin, and being melted into godly sorrow and repentance for it, as some others had been, under the influence of the Spirit. (*Chap. ii. 37.*)

55 But he, being under an immediate fresh effusion of the Holy Ghost, whereby the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon him, (*1 Pet. iv. 14.*) and knowing their desperate malignity against him, looked
above

heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

above the terrors of men, and lifted up his eyes and heart to heaven, in a way of faith, and of appeal to God, for his vindication, support, and assistance; and with a fixedness of soul on the great realities of that blessed world, together with earnest desire and joyful hopes of going thither, he had a view of the *Shechinah*, or of an illustrious appearance of the divine glory, and of the Lord Jesus in his human nature, as exalted in all authority and dignity, majesty and dominion, in the presence of his Father, * like one standing at his right hand, in a posture ready to plead his righteous cause, to execute judgment on his enemies, to support his suffering servant, and to crown his martyrdom with immortal honour, by receiving him to glory.

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

56 And *Stephen*, in holy ecstasy, and with a noble intrepidity, declared it to them all, saying, Observe and wonder, I, at this very time, clearly see an opening through the clouds into the third heaven; and there I behold Jesus, the Messiah himself, in human form, of illustrious beauty and grandeur, standing, as the great Lord and Judge of all, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, like one ready to exert his authority, to your confusion, and my joy.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

57 Hereupon, taking it for granted without a cause, that he had now spoke blasphemy, and so confirmed their charge upon him, (*chap. vi. 11.*) they bitterly exclaimed against him in a noisy manner, to run him down and drown his voice, and stopped their ears with their fingers, as if they were shocked at his words,

N O T E.

* Christ's state of exaltation is often described in scripture, by his *sitting* at the right hand of God, to denote his regal dignity, and his glorious and abiding rest, after his trials and sufferings, and triumphant victory over all his enemies on earth: But I think this is the only place where it is expressed by his *standing* at God's right hand, which may be for such reasons as are suggested in the Paraphrase. God is indeed an immense invisible Spirit, in whom, literally speaking, there can be neither right, nor left hand; and therefore Christ's *sitting*, or *standing* at his right hand, must be understood in a figurative sense: But as God was formerly seen on earth in the *Shechinah*, which was a visible manifestation of his glory; so the glory of God the Father may probably be displayed, in some inconceivably illustrious and visible appearance in heaven, on the right side of which, as most honourable, our Lord, in human nature, is placed.

Accordingly, when *Stephen* saw this glory of God, he saw Jesus stand on his right hand, or side; which, in other representations, is called his *sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, and *on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*. (*Heb. i. 3.* and *viii. 1.*) And some have thought, that, the heavens being opened, *Stephen's* sight was so miraculously strengthened, as to see the divine glory, and the man Jesus, in the third heavens, with his bodily eyes: But others suppose, that he had only a visionary representation of these things, like those which the prophets *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* had, (*Isa. vi. 1.* and *Ezek. i. 1.*) and like that of the apostle *John*, when he saw the new Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven. (*Rev. xxi. 2.*) However, it was a divine discovery of the man Jesus, as really exalted in all his glory, after he had left this world, and was gone to the Father.

And they all on words, and could not bear to hear them; and the whole multitude, being by these means stirred up into a fury, violently rushed upon him with one consent.

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled

58 And as criminals were formerly ordered to be put to death, without the camp, (*Lev. xxiv. 14, 23.*) and afterwards without the city; (*1 Kings xxi. 13.*) so they thrust him out of *Jerusalem*, as if he were an accursed wretch; and then, under pretence of executing the law against blasphemers, (*Lev. xxiv. 16.*) they stoned him, till he died; (see the note on *John xviii. 31.*) and as the witnesses were to begin the execution, (*Deut. xvii. 6, 7.*) so the persons that had deposed, as evidences against him, threw off their upper garments, that they might be the fitter for their laborious and tragical work, and committed them to the custody of a young man * named *Saul*, who was now a furious zealot against *Stephen* and his doctrine, but afterwards became a famous convert and apostle of *Jesus Christ*.

59 And all the while that they were battering *Stephen* with showers of stones, he behaved with a noble Christian fortitude and composure of spirit, invoking or calling upon the Lord *Jesus* in prayer, with faith in him, as a divine person, and saying (*ἐπικαλοῦμαι καὶ λέγωμαι, Κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ*) O blessed Saviour, who art Lord of all, and for whose sake I am now suffering martyrdom, I humbly commit my departing soul to thy special care and love, begging that thou wouldst receive it into thine immediate presence in thy heavenly kingdom; and putting my trust and confidence in thee, that as soon as I am absent from the body, I shall be present with thee.

60 And, at length, in the midst of their cruelties and

N O T E.

* *Saul* was his *Hebrew* name, which signifies *asked*, or *desired*; he was likewise called *Paul*, which was his *Roman* name, and signifies *little*; and if this was originally his *Roman* name, there is not much room for supposing, as some do, that it was given him with a reference to the *shortness* of his stature. However, after he became an apostle, he was chiefly known by this name, as the most acceptable to the *Gentiles*. He was a native of *Tarsus*, the chief city of *Cilicia*; but was descended from *Hebrew* parents, of the tribe of *Benjamin*, and was a youth of pregnant parts, a warm *Pharisee*, and bigot to *Judaism*, and a good scholar, having been first educated in the *Greek* language, philosophy, and poetry, in a very polite and noted school of *Tarsus*, and afterwards studied divinity, ac-

cording to the *Jewish* law, and the traditions of the elders, in a school at *Jerusalem*, under the famous *Gamaliel* his tutor; and he continued a furious zealot against Christianity, till the Lord *Jesus* met him, and converted him, as he was going on a persecuting errand to *Damascus*. (*Chap. xxii. 3, 4, 5. and Phil. iii. 5, 6.*) He was likewise brought up to the business of a tent-maker; it being customary, among even the rich *Jesus*, to breed their children, though students, to some handy-craft trade, to prevent idleness and sin, and make them capable of earning their livelihood, if, by any turn of Providence, they should have occasion for it. See *Dr. Lightfoot*, Vol. I. p. 295. and in *Gloss.* p. 789.

ed down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

and his own distress, he fell upon his knees; and in that reverent posture prayed, with great earnestness, piety, and charity, and with an audible voice, in imitation of his dying Saviour, saying, Lord, let not this great iniquity of my murderers be imputed to, and punished upon them; let them not be dealt with by thee as they are now dealing with me; but let the merit of thy blood plead for them, and bring them to saving repentance; and let them be brought to faith in thee for the remission of this, and of all their other sins. And as soon as he had poured out the desire of his heart in this charitable strain for them, which was afterwards remarkably answered in the conversion of *Saul*, (chap. ix.) he received his last mortal wound, and died with as much composure and satisfaction as if he had been only laying himself down to sleep in the arms of *Jesus*, who will raise his body, which rests in the grave from all its former fatigues and sufferings, to a glorious immortality.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Do any call us to account concerning our faith and hope in Christ? Let the law and the testimony be our defence; they all along speak of him, and by them we are assured that he, who, with relation to his office, bore the name of the Angel of the Lord, is in himself the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, who appeared to *Moses* in the flaming bush without consuming it, was with him in all his dangers, and wrought all the wonders of *Israel's* deliverances by his hands; and who was typified by that famous prophet, and by *Joshua*, their leader into the land of *Canaan*; and by the tabernacle and temple, and is now exalted, in our nature, to the highest dignity of his office in heaven, and is the proper object of faith and religious worship.—How true and faithful is God to his covenant; though we, alas! are dull of understanding, and do not observe his way and time for fulfilling it! But how sure are his performances of all his promises, in due season, to them that trust in him; and how graciously does he accept them and their services, according to his own institution, of what nation, or in what place soever they are! And, O how much better is it to have God dwelling in our hearts by faith, and in our religious assemblies by his Spirit, as his temple upon earth, till we get to the throne of his glory in heaven, than to imagine that his special presence is confined to any material temple! But ah! how prone are hypocritical professors to be more fond of rites and ceremonies, than of his law and gospel! How sadly have many revolted from him, resisted his Spirit, persecuted his servants, and rejected him, and his salvation, to their own dreadful perdition! But the Lord *Jesus* will stand by the true confessors of his name at the worst of times, will fill them with the Holy Ghost, and give them seasonable manifestations of his glory; and when his enemies cast them out, and cruelly put them to death, he stands ready to support and comfort them, to take them into the arms of his love, and to receive them into heaven, that they may live with him for ever. And O! with what holy liberty, zeal, and courage, will they speak for him, and suffer even to the worst of martyrdoms for his sake, when he calls them to it, and strengthens them for it! With what humble confidence, and assuring satisfaction, may they invoke his name, and commit their departing souls to him; and with what peace and pleasure may they die, with a forgiving spirit toward their enemies, and with joyful hope of their own souls going immediately to *Jesus*, and of their bodies sleeping in him, till they shall awake to everlasting life, and appear with him in glory!

C. H. A. P. VIII.

The persecution of the church, 1,—3. Its enlargement chiefly by means of Philip's preaching the gospel at Samaria with great success, 4,—13. The apostles, Peter and John, confirm the disciples there, and severely reprove Simon Magus, 14,—25. And Philip, by order of an angel preaches Christ to the Eunuch, baptizes, and leaves him, 26,—40.

TEXT.

AND Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem: and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house,

PARAPHRASE.

NOW Saul, with others of his own kidney, (*conversary*) concurred in, and was highly pleased at Stephen's death, vainly imagining, that this first and vigorous execution of such a bold champion for Christianity, would strike terror into all its friends, and put a stop to its increase: And as the sanhedrim saw their authority sinking, and were exasperated to the last degree at Stephen's cutting discourse, a severe persecution was raised against the church at Jerusalem; and all its preachers, who were chiefly struck at, dispersed themselves through the countries of Judea and Samaria, to avoid the heat of the storm, and to preach the gospel in those parts, according to Christ's directions, (*Matth. x. 23. and Acts i. 8.*) Only the apostles, by special intimations from the Spirit, kept together; and committing themselves, amidst all danger, to the divine protection, stayed in that city, to support the persecuted interest there, to observe the openings of Providence, and to be ready to go wherever it should call them.

In the mean time, some of Stephen's religious friends, to shew their respect to him, and their zeal for the cause of Christ, ventured, in the face of all danger, to carry off his mangled corpse, and give it a decent funeral, greatly bewailing the loss, and the barbarous execution of such an useful worthy person.

But to return, Saul, who was a furious bigot to Judaism, and a bitter enemy to Christianity, (see the note on chap. vii. 58.) and was mentioned but now, (*ver. 1.*) as abetting and taking pleasure in the inhuman

NOTE.

* They were all scattered abroad, are distinguished from them that were must be taken with some limitation, scattered abroad. (*ver. 1.—4.*) These the apostles themselves continuing at Jerusalem, and there being still devout Christians, who were probably converts from among the Jewish proselytes that buried Stephen, with great lamentations over him at his grave: and there being, besides these, many other men and women, whom Saul persecuted, and who

house, and, haling man murder of Stephen, This hot-headed youth, was men and women, committed them to prison. one of the forwardest to carry on the persecution; and having received authority from the sanhedrim, (*chap. xxii. 5.*) he laid himself out, with all his might, to distress the church, and made dreadful waite upon it, breaking open the doors of their places of worship; and of private houses where Christians dwelt, or were harboured; and dragging away women, as well as men, without shewing the least compassion to the tender sex, and throwing them into jail, without distinction, in order to their being tried and condemned to death. (*Chap. xxii. 45.*)

4 Therefore they 4 As therefore, through the violence of the times, that were scatter- there was no opportunity for public ministrations at ed abroad, went e- Jerusalem, the preachers, that by this means were very where preach- forced away from thence, and dispersed into other ing the word. parts, went on severally with their work of publish- ing the glad tidings of the gospel, (*chap. xxi. 28.*) in different places wherever they came; and for the at- tempts, that were made to suppress the doctrine of Christ, were over-ruled by Providence for the greater and wider propagation of it.

5 Then Philip 5 Among the rest, Philip the evangelist, who was went down to the also one of the seven deacons lately chosen, (*chap. vi. 5.* and *xxi. 8.*) went to one of the chief cities of the city of Samaria, and preached Christ un- to them: where our Lord himself had been about three or four years before; (*John iv.*) and there he proclaimed Jesus Christ to the people, (*chap. xxi. 28.*) as the Son of God and the true Messiah, who had been crucified, but was risen again, and exalted at the Father's right hand; and shewed them the way of salvation through him.

6 And the peo- 6 And as many of the Samaritans had believed in ple with one ac- Christ, upon his own personal preaching to them, cord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, though he had wrought no miracles among them, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (*John iv. 39, 41.* see the note there) so great multitudes of them (*οχλοι*) now, with one consent, attended to, and received with faith and love, the gospel concerning him, which Philip taught them; while they not only heard him preach, but saw the miracles that he wrought to confirm his doctrine; and heard the words by which he performed them in the name of Jesus, whom he proclaimed to them; and were witnesses of the confessions that were thereupon made of the Saviour, to his glory.

7 For evil unclean 7 For evil infernal spirits, whose temper, work, spirits; crying with and design were vile and sinful, finding themselves un- able to resist the mighty power of Christ, which at- tended

N O T E.

* This was probably *Shechem*, which the Jews, by way of reproach, called *Sychar*. (See the note on *John iv. 5.*)

out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.

10 To whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

tended Philip's words, cried out with hideous rage, and thereupon instantly, though against their wills, departed from abundance of persons whom they had corporally possessed: (see the note on *Matth.* iv. 24.) And many others that had been so dreadfully seized with palsies, and had lost the use of their limbs to such a degree, as to be incurable by human art, were effectually recovered to health and strength.

8 And such was the power of divine grace upon a multitude of souls, and such the miracles of mercy upon many bodies, that the greatest satisfaction and delight diffused through the minds and hearts of the people of that city, in their embracing the gospel.

9 But there was a noted infamous man, one *Simon Magus*, who taking the opportunity of the general expectation of the Messiah in those days, and endeavouring to deface the good impressions which Christ had formerly made upon that people concerning himself, when he was personally among them, had for some time past used magical arts, and worked sham miracles, by diabolical aid, in this very city, and had thereby strangely infatuated and amused the minds of the *Samaritans*; he, at the same time, according to the custom of impostors*, boasting of himself as a very great and extraordinary man, of a divine character.

10 And such a delusive influence had his magical pranks upon this people, that high and low, young and old among them, generally paid him a great deal of reverence and regard, and cried him up for a wonderful person, saying, He is surely endued with the almighty power of the great God himself.

11 And they gave great attention to him, and to all that he said; because for a considerable time he had enchanted and confounded their minds, through his artful management, in the way of witchcraft†, by unaccountable charms.

12 But

N O T E S.

* Some think that *Simon* pretended himself to be the Messiah, or some great prophet and messenger from God: And it appears from *Ireneus*, *Tertullian*, *Iustin Martyr*, and others of the ancients, that he blasphemously gave himself out to be the chief God; yea, to be God the Father above all, and God over all principality and power; and pretended to appear to the Jews as the Son, to the *Samaritans* as the Father, and to other nations as the Holy Ghost. See an account of these, and others of his monstrously blasphemous and abominably licentious doctrines, in *Lightfoot* and *Whitby* on the place.

† How fabulous soever stories of

witchcraft may have been in latter ages, it seems as if, by divine permission, for the more evident distinguishing of true miracles from other appearances, there were really a diabolical power exerted by *Simon Magus*, in working his pretended miracles, like that of the magicians in *Egypt*: But this was as much outdone by the true miracles of *Philip*, as that was by those of *Moses*; and we may be sure that God will always overcome, whenever the contest lies between him and the devil, and will give indisputable proofs of superior power in the miracles of which he is the author, beyond all that can be done by any mere creature in opposition to him.

12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

12 But when the very persons that had been so egregiously imposed upon by *Simon*, and led captive by the devil at his will, were by a divine influence convinced of, and brought to receive by faith the joyful tidings of salvation which *Philip* preached, relating to the spiritual blessings, privileges, and obligations of the gospel-state, which should issue in heavenly glory, and to Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour, Lord, and King of the church, by whose power alone all these miracles were wrought; they then deserted the impostor, and cheerfully came under the initiating seal of God's covenant, which in this new dispensation of grace, was equally applicable to male and female, they being all one in Christ Jesus, and become Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. iii. 27, 28, 29.) And so both men and women, who were now delivered from the power of Satan, and translated into Christ's kingdom, (Col. i. 13.) were baptized in his name, in testimony of their devotedness, subjection, and adherence to him; and, in that way, became professed and acknowledged members of the Christian church.

13 Then *Simon* himself believed also: and, when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

13 Then *Simon* himself also seeing the miracles that were vastly superior to all he had pretended to, and observing that thereupon the people went over so entirely from him to Christ, was brought to a conviction in his own mind, that *Philip's* doctrine must needs be true: And he, making an open profession of faith therein, ran with the crowd, and was baptized; after which, with all appearances of a sincere convert, he kept company with *Philip*, and attended on his ministry: And as he was daily an eye-witness of still further wonderful works of divine power and goodness, which were so many undeniable attestations to the truth of the gospel, (see the note on chap. ii. 22.) he was filled with as much astonishment at them as the people had been before at his own forgeries.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John;

14 Now, after some time, when the apostles, who still continued together at Jerusalem, (ver. 1.) came to hear the good news that many of the Samaritans had embraced the gospel as the word of God, they agreed to send two of their number to them; and particularly fixed on *Peter* and *John* for that purpose, that they might help forward the promising beginnings, by countenancing and assisting *Philip* in their preaching; by confirming the disciples, and conferring spiritual gifts upon them, which none but apostles were capable of doing; and by settling a church in those parts, and doing every thing else, that might be further requisite for propagating the interest and

15. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18. And when Simon saw, that, through laying on of the apostles hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19. Saying,

and kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and the good of immortal souls.

15. And as Peter did not claim any superiority of power over the rest of the apostles, or take upon him to send others, or to go of his own head; so, by the order of his brethren, he and John cheerfully went, as fellow-servants and messengers of the body; and upon their arrival at *Samaria*, they recommended the new converts to God in prayer, that, at this first plantation of the gospel among them, they might be made partakers of such extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as Infinite Wisdom should see fit to bestow upon them, for the more evident demonstration, that the doctrine they had received was indeed the word of God; that it had effectually worked upon their hearts; and that, under this blessed dispensation of grace, they should be admitted to equal privileges and blessings with *Jewish* converts.

16. For hitherto the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit had not descended upon any of these *Samaritan* believers; they were only partakers of his enlightening and sanctifying influences, whereby they were brought to believe in Christ, and to be baptized in his name, by virtue of his authority, and in token of their relation and subjection to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and of their faith in him, and engagements to be his. (See the note on chap. ii. 38.)

17. When these two apostles had prayed for them, they used the significant ceremony of laying their hands upon them, as an intimation that their prayers were answered, and as a signal that the gifts prayed for were then conferred; and they accordingly were, in a visible manner, made partakers of wonderful miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost.

18. And when Simon the sorcerer saw that, through the apostles laying their hands on persons heads, such surprising gifts of the Holy Ghost were, without any more ado, freely and immediately conveyed to them; he stared like a man aghast; and thinking with himself, that there was something very pompous and divine-like in this exercise of their authority, and that, if he were but able to do the same, it would effectually answer the utmost of his covetous and ambitious views; and imagining that the apostles were as mercenary creatures as himself, he offered to tempt them with a round sum of money,

19. Saying,

N O T E.

* That it was in some, visible manner, at least as to its effects, is plain from Simon's seeing it, (ver. 18.) and it was probably seen, in their speaking with tongues and prophesying, as in chap. xix. 6.

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that, on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and

19 Saying, Be so good as to confer this noble power upon me, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost in the same manner as these persons have, by your laying hands on them; and all this treasure shall be yours.

20 But as his making this proposal was the highest affront that could be put upon the apostles, and discovered the most carnal self-seeking temper of mind, and the most unworthy notions of the nature and design of the Christian religion, and of the miracles that confirmed it*, Peter said to him, with indignation and disdain, O thou abandoned wretch, we will have nothing to do with your iniquitous reward; we detest it as mean earthly treasure, which will perish with yourself, whose horrible abuse of your riches will aggravate your ruin, because you was so monstrously foolish and wicked, as to imagine that the free gift of God, in bestowing the Holy Ghost, for answering spiritual and heavenly purposes, might be bought with the pelf of this world, and that to subserve your vile design of going on to delude the people more than ever.

21 Assure yourself, that you have no claim to the least share or inheritance in the privileges and blessings of this dispensation of the Spirit, and in Christ and heavenly glory: For how specious soever your professions of faith may be, it hereby appears, with undeniable evidence, that your heart is hypocritical and perverse; and that God has all along seen it to be so, whatsoever men may judge concerning you, or whatsoever you may think of yourself.

22 It is therefore your highest interest, as well as duty, to take conviction of, and to be deeply afflicted and humbled for this your abominable crime, and earnestly to beg of God to give you a just sense of it, and to deliver you from its guilt and power, if it be not the unpardonable sin, and there be any possibility, after all, that the evil imagination of your heart may be graciously forgiven you.

23 For as to your present condition before God†, I certainly know that you are in a dreadful state of sin and condemnation, which is as distasteful to God,

as

NOTES.

* From this sin of *Simon*, the procuring of ministerial functions, or of ecclesiastical benefices, by bribery, is called *Simony*.

† It does not seem necessary to suppose that the apostle spoke this by an extraordinary discerning of spirits, which was sometimes exercised on special occasions,

as a miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost: since a common judgment of discretion might be sufficient to determine his thoughts in so plain a case, according to our Lord's own rule, about judging of pretenders to religion. *By their fruits ye shall know them.* (Mat. vii. 16,—20.)

and in the bond of iniquity.

as nauseous in its own nature, and as bitter in its fruits and effects, (*Deut.* xxix. 18. and xxxii. 32.) as gall and worm-wood can be to the palate of a man; yea, that you are as thoroughly drenched in the corruption of nature, and overcome by it, as a man is by the most pernicious intoxicating liquor, when he is in drink; and that you are held fast by the cords and bands of wickedness, (*Isa.* lviii. 6.) bound down by the power of sin and Satan, and bound over to the righteous judgment of God, and to everlasting destruction by his holy law, in as deplorable circumstances, as the greatest slave and criminal possibly can be.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

24 Then *Simon* was so far struck at this close and awful rebuke, that as *Pharaoh*, though his heart continued to be hardened, desired *Moses* and *Aaron* to pray that the fore judgments which were inflicted, as the punishment of his sin, might be removed; (*Exod.* viii. 8. and x. 17.) so this stupid magician, instead of being concerned that his heart might be right in the sight of God, and that he might have repentance unto life, and find gospel-forgiveness of his sin, was so afraid of God's judgments, that he said to *Peter* and *John*, Alas! my case being so bad, as ye have told me, I cannot be supposed to have any interest with God myself; and therefore I intreat that ye, whom your Lord has honoured with visible tokens of his favour, would be so good as to beg of him on my behalf, that none of the terrible wrath and vengeance may be executed upon me, which, from what ye have said, I have reason to apprehend myself exposed to.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

25 And after these things passed between the two apostles and this forerer, when they had sufficiently established the testimony of *Philip*, by preaching the same gospel with him, and miraculously confirming it with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as they themselves had received it of Christ, and so had settled a church in those parts; they, not being yet to disperse into various places, returned to their brethren, the other ten apostles, at *Jerusalem*; and, in their way, took all opportunities of publishing the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, in many towns and villages of the *Samaritans*.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

26 *Philip* also having finished his present work of preaching the gospel at the chief city of *Samaria*, before-mentioned, (*ver.* 5.) one of the holy angels, who are Christ's servants, was dispatched with an immediate message from heaven; and, appearing to the evangelist, said, Get ready out of hand, and depart with all speed from hence into the solitary road, which lies towards the south, and leads from *Jerusalem* to the

the city called *Gaza*, in the tribe of *Judab*, through the wilderness of *Judea*.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of *Ethiopia*, an eunuch of great authority under *Candace* queen of the *Ethiopians*, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to *Jerusalem* for to worship,

27 And though one would have thought that little work was like to be done in such a desert place; yet *Philip* immediately obeyed the divine order; got up, and went to the aforesaid place: And at his arrival thither, behold a signal opportunity offered for making *Christ* known to a man of quality, though not many mighty, nor noble are called, (1 *Cor.* i. 26.) and for transmitting the gospel, even as far as *Ethiopia* in *Africa*, according to the ancient prophecy, (*Psal.* lxxviii. 31.) *Ethiopia* shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. There was a great man of that country, a chief officer, of eminent station and dignity, power and influence, under *Candace**, the then queen of *Ethiopia*; he was her high-treasurer, and being a proselyte of righteousness† to the *Jewish* religion, had been at *Jerusalem* to pay his solemn homage to God there, according to the appointment of the law.

28 Was returning, and, sitting in his chariot, read *Esaia's* the prophet.

28 As this nobleman was going back for *Ethiopia*, and reading in his chariot, he, like a man of a religious and inquisitive temper, spent his time, suitable to the sacred work he had been about, in reading some part of the prophecy of *Isaiah*.

29 Then the Spirit said unto *Philip*, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

29 And as God, in the ordinary course of his providence, directs his ministering servants where, and to whom, they shall preach the gospel; so, in this more peculiar case, he, in an extraordinary manner, by an immediate suggestion of his Spirit, said to *Philip*, Draw near to that chariot, which you see passing

O 2

along

N O T E S.

* *Candace* was a common name for the queens of *Ethiopia*, as *Pharaoh* was for the kings of *Egypt*, and *Cesar* for the emperors of *Rome*; and chief officers were called *eunuchs*, though not always literally so, because such used to be chief ministers in the courts of the eastern nations: Hence the *Seventy* call *Potiphar*, *οὐνοῦχος παπᾶς*, an eunuch of *Pharaoh*: *Jerome* and *Ensebius* report, (vid. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. vi. cap. 1.) that this eunuch became a preacher of *Christ* in *Ethiopia*.

† It appears that the eunuch was a proselyte of righteousness, because he had been at *Jerusalem*, to worship at one of the *Jewish* solemn festivals, and was reading in the prophets, which were not so much regarded by the proselytes of the gate; and principally, because *Cornelius* and his family, who seem to have been proselytes of the gate, were, long after this, the first converts from among the *Gentiles*, (chap. xv. 14. and see the note on chap. x. 1.) which great-

ly alarmed and offended the believing *Jews*. The proselytes of righteousness were those that descended from *Gentile* parents, but were circumcised, and submitted to the whole law of *Moses*; and so were looked upon as *Jews*, there being one law to both. (*Exod.* xii. 48, 49.) But the proselytes of the gate, which were called strangers within the gates of *Israel*, (*Exod.* xx. 10.) were uncircumcised *Gentiles*, who, nevertheless were distinguished from the idolatrous *Gentiles*, by their worshipping the true God of *Israel*, and submitting to what were called the seven precepts of *Noah*, which, we are told, were these: They (1) Forbade idolatry, (2) Commanded reverence of God's name, (3) Forbade murder, (4) Adultery and incest, (5) Theft, (6) Commanded the exercise of justice, and (7) Forbade eating things strangled, and blood. Vid. *Jurieu Hist. de Dogm. & des Cult. de l'Eglise*. Part I. chap. vi.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? and he desired Philip that he would come up, and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

along the road, and join company with the person who is there on his journey.

30 *Philip*, accordingly made up with all speed to him, and found him reading in the prophecy of *Isaiab*, with a great deal of earnestness, and so loud, that his attendants, or any that approached the chariot, might hear him: Hereupon he, in a respectful manner, put a seasonable and important question to him, saying, Do you, Sir, understand the meaning of that famous passage which you are pronouncing with your lips?

31 The eunuch replied, Alas! I am but a novice in religion, extremely ignorant of the great things of God, and insufficient to know them of myself: How therefore can I take in the true meaning of the prophet in this place, which appears very obscure to me, unless I had some good interpreter to open it? And apprehending that this stranger, who thus accosted him, might be such an one, he courteously invited *Philip* to come into his chariot, and explain the prophet's words to him.

32 Now the paragraph of holy scripture, which he was then reading, was that in *Isaiab* liii. 7, 8. according to the version of the *Septuagint* then in use, *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter*, when it is to be offered in sacrifice, discovering a meek, inoffensive, and resigned temper, and going just as his enemies pleased, without opposition or reluctance, while they were leading him to his death; and, *as a lamb before the shearer* of its fleece is still and silent, *so he opened not his mouth*, in a way of murmuring or recrimination; but was patient under all his sufferings, and readily complied with his Father's will in submitting to them.

33 *In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away*, which * signifies, that he appeared so mean a person in his low estate of self-abasement, that his enemies unrighteously judged him fit to be sacrificed to their rage; so that he was hurried, under custody, from place to place, from one judgment-seat to another, and then to execution; in all which his right was taken away, and no justice was shewn him; but at length, he was judicially acquitted and discharged by God his Father, from his confinement in the grave, and from the unjust judgment that men had passed upon him; yea, and from the penal sentence of the law.

NOTE.

* As commentators are much divided in their sentiments about the meaning of this verse, I have endeavoured to take in every sense, that appears to be

probable and consistent with the context; though it is not to be supposed that the eunuch understood it in either of them, while he was reading it.

law of God, which was executed upon him, as the substitute of his people; and so he was legally taken from prison and from judgment, in token of God's own approbation of him, and of his being fully satisfied by his death as a sacrifice for sin: And *who shall declare his generation*, so as to give account of his rise and original, or of his life in heaven, or of his numerous seed on earth? And who can express the wickedness of the age in which he lived and suffered? *For his life is taken away from the earth*, as if he had been as unable to preserve it, and as criminal as the worst of other men; and, like them, were to have no further interest or concern in this world, or in any affairs below.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

34 Hereupon this great minister of state said to Philip, I beg you would satisfy me in a main point, relating to the passage before us, which I own myself to be at a loss to determine, Of whom are we to understand that *Isaiah* here speaks? Is it concerning himself, or with relation to some other eminent prophet in his, or our, or some future age?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

35 Then Philip, glad to lay hold on such a favourable opportunity, opened his mouth and heart freely to him; and, taking this very passage of scripture for his text, began from thence to shew him, that this and many other prophecies were clearly and fully accomplished in Jesus, which proved him to be the true Messiah, who had been unjustly arraigned, condemned, and crucified, and behaved all along with the most exemplary innocence, patience, and resignation to God his Father's will, who had appointed him to be a sacrifice of atonement; and who publicly approved, acquitted, and owned him, as one that had completely answered all his demands, by raising him again from the dead, and exalting him to a throne of glory in the highest heavens; where he lives and reigns with all authority, in the exercise of which he has set up a kingdom of grace, into which believers are to be visibly entered by being baptized in his name; and is forming, and gathering in, subjects to himself, by means of his gospel, under the efficacious influence of his Spirit upon earth.

36 And, as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the

36 And while they were riding along, and Philip was explaining and enlarging upon this delightful theme, they came to a place where there was some water*: And the eunuch's heart being opened, by means

NOTE

* *T. says, a certain water*, seems to be of diminutive signification, and to intimate, that it was not water of any depth: And *Jerome, Sandys*, and other travellers, speak of it, as a certain spring or fountain, that rises at the foot of a mountain in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin, whose waters are sucked in by

the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And, when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

means of this discourse, to receive Christ, he said, Look, here is water, why may I not now be baptized, without delay, as I am desirous to be, to testify my acceptance of Christ, and subjection to him? What objection can there be against it?

37 *Philip* answered, If you sincerely believe, with full consent and approbation of soul, and with a determined adherence to, and trust in the Lord Jesus, for all salvation, there can be no just objection against your being partaker of this gospel-sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. To which the eunuch replied, saying, I do in my very heart believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, whom God has anointed to his saving office, and that he is a divine person; as such I cordially receive him, and place all my dependence upon him, and am determined, by his grace, to own and abide by him.

38 And having made this noble confession of his faith to the entire satisfaction of *Philip*, he ordered the chariot to stop: And thereupon, both of them, the evangelist and the treasurer, went down from thence* to the water, and *Philip* performed the office of baptism, according to Christ's institution, (*Matth.* xxviii. 19.) by washing him with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

39 But (2.) as soon as they came up the rising ground from the water, the Spirit of the Lord, by whose suggestion *Philip* had joined himself to the chariot, (*ver.* 29.) caught him away in a miraculous manner; which was equivalent to his own performing a miracle in confirmation of his doctrine, and, at the same time, shewed, that he neither expected nor waited for any reward, which, probably, this rich

NOTES.

by the same ground that produces them; and they report that this was the place where the eunuch was baptized by *Philip*. Vid. *Hieron. de Locis. Hebr.* pag. 41. and *Sandys' travels*, lib. ii. pag. 142.

* The propositions *into* and *out*, here, and in the next verse, rendered *into* and *out* of the water, frequently signify *unto* and *from*, as every one must allow who understands the *Greek* language; and thus they are often used in the style of the New Testament, and particularly of *Luke*, as for example; *into* signifies *unto* in *Matth.* xv. 24. *Luke* iv. 5. and vi. 12. and ix. 28. *Acts* xiv. 21. and *Colos.* i. 20. And *out* signifies *from*, *Luke* xx. 4. *John* xix. 12. *Acts* xiv. 8. and xv. 21, 29. and xvii. 3, 31. and xxvii. 34. (See the note

on *Matth.* iii. 6.) But supposing we here understand them to signify *into* and *out* of, Mr. Henry says, *Philip* and the eunuch did not strip off their cloaths and go naked into the water; but going barefoot, according to the custom, they went, perhaps, up to the ancles, or mid-leg, into the water, and *Philip* sprinkled water upon him, according to the prophecy, which this eunuch had probably but just now read; for it was but a few verses before those that *Philip* found him upon, and was very apposite to his case. *Isa.* lii. 15. So shall he sprinkle many nations, kings and great men shall bow their mouths at him, shall submit to him for that which had not before been to them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they comprehend.

courtier, would have offered him; so that the eunuch, who would have been glad of more of his company, lost sight of him, and never met with him again: And having been thus highly favoured of God, he pursued his journey, rejoicing greatly in his own knowledge of Christ, and interest in him, and in the opportunity he had of carrying the glad tidings of a Saviour home to his own countymen. (See the note on ver. 27.)

40 But Philip was found at A-
ness: and passing
through, he preach-
ed in all the cities,
till he came to Ce-
sarea.

40 And (M) Philip was carried as far as *Asotus*, or *Asbdod*, (1 Sam. vi. 17.) about thirty miles distant from the place where he was taken up; and going from thence, he preached Christ to the inhabitants of many towns and cities, through which he passed, till he arrived at *Cæsarea*, the metropolis of *Palestine*, where he afterwards had his usual abode. (Chap. xxi. 8.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

What matter of lamentation is it, that faithful and eminent servants of Christ should be cruelly put to death! But, O the adorable wisdom of God, who makes the blood of martyrs the seed of the church, and over-rules the oppressions and scatterings of his servants for the wider spread of the gospel! And when he sets in, by his Spirit, with the preaching of Christ, how cordially is the crucified and exalted Saviour embraced; and how readily owned in a solemn profession of his name, and willing devotedness of ourselves to him, without delay, according to his institution by baptism, in case we, like the *Samaritans* and the eunuch, have not been brought under the gospel-administration of the covenant before! But, alas! how melancholy is the thought, that the hearts of any should not be right with God; and that, through avarice and ambition, they should be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, while they assent to the doctrine of Christ, make a cre- dible profession of him, are baptized in his name, wonder at the effects of his power in others, and abide for some time with his people and servants! But as the works of God every way exceed, and confound the forgeries of the devil; so true believers shall be confirmed in their faith and hope, while vengeance lights on the heads of apostates, that are not brought to true repentance: And, O, with what earnestness should all those, that are falling into such deplorable circumstances, beg of God to convince them of, and recover them from, the wickedness of their hearts and ways; and how should they, with sincerer desires than *Simon Magus*, bespeak the prayers of his servants, to prevent its dismal consequence, before they are past hope of finding mercy! Though some flourishing professors may prove the grossest hypocrites, this should not discourage the ministers of Christ; they should still go on to preach the gospel, as they have opportunities; and when they follow the in- structions of his word, Spirit, and providence, in their work, they may comfort- ably hope for happy success: He, by their means, will find out his elect, and make his word plain to them who did not understand it before; so that they shall be brought to believe in the Lord Jesus with all their hearts, as the only Saviour and the Son of God, and to yield themselves up to a professed subjection to his authority; and shall go on their way rejoicing in his love, and in all opportunities of publishing his praise. How good is it to be diligent in reading the scripture, and attending to gospel-ministrations; and how surely shall they know the Lord, that follow on to know him!

C H A P. IX.

Saul going to persecute Christ's disciples at Damascus, is converted by the way, 1,—9. Is baptized by Ananias, 10,—19. Immediately preaches Christ, 20,—22. The Jews and Greeks are so provoked at his, as to seek his life; but he escapes them both, 23,—30. Peter cures Æneas of the palsy at Lydda, 31,—35. And raises Tibitha from the dead at Joppa, 36,—43.

TEXT.

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed

PARAPHRASE.

AS for Saul, who has been taken notice of more than once before, as an approver and promoter of Stephen's death, and as a violent persecutor of others, (*chap. vii. 58.* see the note there, and *chap. viii. 1, 3.*) all the desire of his soul, and all his language and behaviour still continued to vent the malignant enmity of his heart, like hot and poisonous breath, which was natural to him, against the disciples of Christ, in bitter menaces to terrify them, and in all manner of severities to destroy them, verily thinking himself in the right, and that he was therein doing God good service; (*chap. xxvi. 9.* and *John xxi. 2.*) though, soon after, sovereign grace made an effectual change on this chief of sinners, as we shall presently see, (*ver. 3, &c.*) that none might despair of finding mercy, through faith in the all-sufficient Saviour. (*1 Tim. i. 15, 16.*)

2 As some of the persecuted brethren, (*chap. viii. 1.*) had carried the gospel as far as *Damascus*, a famous city, and formerly the metropolis of *Syria*, (*Ila. vi. 8.*) about one hundred and fifty miles from *Jerusalem*, and had planted it without disturbance there, and as the Jewish synagogues beyond, as well as within the confines of *Palestine*, owned the authority of the sanhedrim; so this young zealot applied to the high-priest, as head of that great council; and obtained warrants, under their seal, to the synagogues of that ancient city, (*chap. xxii. 5.*) to require of the rulers, that, in case he should find any professors of that way, which was eminently the way of God for acceptable worship and all salvation by Jesus Christ, but which they called heresy, (*chap. xxiv. 14.*) they should deliver them up to him, without distinction of sexes, ranks, or ages, in order to his bringing them bound, like capital criminals, under safe custody, to be tried and punished by their supreme ecclesiastical court at *Jerusalem*, as enemies to their religion. (See the notes on *John xviii. 31.* and *Acts vi. 12.*)

3 And pursuing his journey with eagerness, and resolution

Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

solution to execute his cruel commission with the utmost rigour, he drew near to *Damascus*; and there, unexpectedly, and all on a sudden, about mid-day, (*chap. xxii. 6.*) a miraculous light, an emblem of spiritual knowledge and purity, and of the divine presence and favour, darted down from heaven in strong rays of glory, and shone all around him with a dazzling lustre, far exceeding the brightness of the meridian sun. (*Chap. xxvi. 13.*)

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

4 Upon which he, struck with awe and surprise, immediately fell prostrate on the ground; and, together with this appearance of the glory of the Lord, he distinctly heard an articulate voice, directed to him by name, in the *Hebrew* tongue, (*chap. xxvi. 14.*) saying, with great earnestness and compassion, as to one on the brink of destruction, and insensible of his danger, *Saul, Saul*, What art thou a-doing? Why are you so foolish and hardened, daring, and mad, so desperate an enemy to God and your own soul, and so ungrateful, cruel, and unjust, as to reproach, blaspheme, and dishonour me, the kindest and best of friends to mankind, and to attempt the oppression and destruction of my people and cause? What good reason can you possibly give for this? And why do you still persist in it, as though you had not done mischief enough already?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: It is laid for thee to kick against the pricks.

5 *Saul* being convinced that this was the glory, and the voice of one from heaven, answered with shame and reverence, and a desire of information, Lord, Who art thou, that I have been thus wickedly and injuriously acting against? And the Lord Christ replied, I am that Jesus, the only Saviour, whose name you so much abhor, and usually mention, by way of contempt, as *Jesus of Nazareth*, (*chap. xxii. 8.*) and to whom you are offering the greatest cruelty, indignity, and injustice in my members, who are so intimately one with me, that I tenderly sympathize with them, and look upon your ill usage of them for my sake, as, in effect, an abuse done personally to myself: It is sad drudgery that you are engaged in; it is as foolish and fruitless, wounding and destructive to yourself, thus to oppose me, and my interest in, and among my people, as it would be to kick with your naked heel against briars and thorns, spurs and spears. (*xxviii.*)

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise,

6 And these words came, not only with external appearances of divine majesty, (which had that been all, might have had no better effect upon him, than upon the rest of his companions; or than the light and voice from heaven had upon the *Jews* at Christ's baptism; *Matth. iii. 16, 17.* or than the soldiers being

Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

struck to the ground had upon them, when they came to apprehend him; *John* xviii. 6. or than *Elymas* the sorcerer's being smitten with blindness had upon him, *Acts* xiii. 10, 11.) But they came likewise with such a powerful operation of the Spirit upon his heart, that he trembled under a sense of his shocking guilt and danger, and was astonished to think how vile he had been, and what might be the consequence of his sin, and of such an awful appearance and voice to him; and cried out, with great solicitude and concern, between hope and fear, Lord, I am ready to resign to thy authority and command; I have done wickedly, and would do so no more; O, what wouldst thou now have me to do? Let me be led into a right way for knowing and performing thy will; that I may testify my repentance, may do honour to thy name, and may find mercy to the forgiveness of my sins, and to my final salvation. Then the Lord Jesus said to him, Get up, and go forthwith into *Damascus*, and there, instead of acting under your unrighteous commission from the great council at *Jerusalem*, you shall have further instructions about my will, concerning the duty that lies before you, with regard to your own soul, and your being employed in my service. (*Chap.* xxvi. 16, &c.)

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

7 And the company that travelled with him, to aid and assist in his intended inquisition and severities, were confounded, and struck with such reverence and horror, that they made a full stop, like men agast, that could not tell how to speak *, and had no heart to pray, but fell down with the utmost consternation to the ground : (*chap. xxvi. 14.*) For they saw the light, and heard a sound of words, as if it had been the voice of thunder †, but did not understand its meaning, (*chap. xxii. 9.*) neither did they see the appearance of any person amidst the illustrious glory.

3 And Saul arose
from the earth;

8 As soon as Christ had given the word of command, *Saul* rose up from the ground, and opening his eye-lids

NOTES.

* They stood speechless, relates to their being so struck at this visible token of the divine presence, as not to be able to move forwards, any more than to speak, and so is very consistent with what is said (*chap. xxvi. 14.*) about their falling to the earth; or after they got up again, their surprise was so great, that they stood still for a while, like men in amazement.

† Not to bear a voice, often signifies not to understand it; and in this sense, the verb *exaudivi* is frequently used by the *Septuagint*, instances of which may be seen

in Dr. Whitby; and so it is used rendered, 1 Cor. xiv. 2. (*audire ex-
audire*) *No man understands him*: To reco-
nstruct therefore the verse before us with *chap.
xxii. 9.* we may suppose either that *Simeon*
and his companions only heard a loud confused
sound, like the noise of thunder, but not
a distinct articulate voice of words, as
John xii. 29. Or that they were *He-
braic* Jews, and so strangers to the *He-
brew* language, in which these words
were delivered. (*Echap. xxvi. 14*) And
therefore though they might hear these
words they did not understand their meaning.

and when his eyes were opened he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And, hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and laying his hand upon him, that he might receive his sight.

eye-lids to look about him, he found his sight was so affected with the dazzling light of the divine glory, which had shone upon him, (*ver. 3.*) that he was incapable of discerning any of his fellow-travellers; his bodily eyes being now as stark blind, as the eyes of his understanding had been before, amidst the glorious light of the gospel that had shone around him: But they getting up also, took him by the hand, and led him into the city of *Damascus*, he going thither like a captive to Christ, instead of leading his disciples captive to the sanhedrim.

9 And there he continued blind for the space of three days together, and was under such darkness and distress of soul, in reflection upon his sin, as took off all relish for food and drink; and so he spent his time in fasting and prayer. (*ver. 11.*)

10 Then at the end of three days, there being an eminent disciple of Christ at *Damascus*, *Ananias* by name, who had been a devout man, according to the law, and of good report among all the Jews that dwell there, (see the note on chap. xxii. 12.) but was now a convert to the Christian faith; the Lord Jesus appeared, and called to him in a heavenly vision, saying, *Ananias!* And he, to testify his faith and obedience, immediately answered, Behold, Lord, here am I, as thy servant, ready to receive and execute any orders, that thou shalt please to give me.

11 The Lord Jesus replied, Get ready with the utmost dispatch, and go into the street of the city, which is called *Straight*; and at the house of a certain man there, who is well known by the name of *Judas*, ask for one *Saul*, a native of *Tarsus* in *Cilicia**, to whom I now send you: For, behold, I have made a wonderful change upon him; he now, like a sincere convert, is brought upon his knees, and is pouring out his soul in prayer, after a different manner, than he ever did before, with deep abasement, and grief of heart for his sin, and with earnest desire to know my mind and will concerning him.

12 And, for his encouragement, he has had, in answer to his prayer, a visible appearance, as extraordinary as this which I now present to you; and has therein seen you, in the representation of a man, bearing the name of *Ananias*, coming in to him, and laying his hand upon him, as a signal of miraculously restoring him to his sight, which for these three days past he has been deprived of.

P 2

N O T E

13 Then

* It is very observable, that as *Saul* was to be the chief apostle of the Gentiles; so, though both his parents were Jews, his conversion at, or near *Damascus* in *Syria*, and his birth at *Tarsus* in *Cilicia*, were on Gentile-ground.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem;

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

13 Then (N) Ananias being surprised, above measure, at the hearing of such an unparalleled and unlikely event, and apprehensive that going to such a furious hardened persecutor, as *Saul*, might be unsafe for himself, and of no manner of advantage to him, was so far staggered in his faith and obedience, that, like *Moses*, when he was sent to *Pharaoh*, (*Exod. vi. 12.*) he objected against it, saying, Lord, I have been credibly informed from several good hands, that this very man is a most inveterate enemy to thee, and thy people and cause; I have particularly had melancholy accounts of the great havoc he hath made on thy holy and professed disciples at Jerusalem, (*chap. viii. 3.*) who have solemnly devoted themselves to thee.

14 And I am furthermore certainly assured, that in the heat of his mad zeal, he has actually obtained and is now come hither with warrants from the sanhedrim*, in which the chief priests have great sway (*ver. 1, 2.*) to impower him to apprehend and bind and bring as criminals before them, all that he can meet with of thy true worshippers, who regard thee as the object of their faith, and accordingly make conscience of praying to thee, as a divine person, and their only Saviour.

15 But the Lord Jesus would admit of no excuse and to silence his objections, and assure him that no harm should come, but all should be safe and succeed well, he replied, Go on the errand on which I send you, without delay or disputing, fear or doubting: For, how vile and injurious soever he has been to he is one whom, in my wisdom and sovereign grace I have chosen for myself, as a vessel of mercy also prepared to glory, (*Rom. ix. 23.*) and as a vessel to honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and filled with the rich treasure of the gospel, (*2 Tim. ii. 21.* and *2 Cor. iv. 7.*) that he, as an instrument in my hand, may promote my cause and interest, and may give an undoubted testimony to, and make a noble profession of, my name amongst even heathen nations, and before the greatest men upon earth, (such as *Festus* and *Felix*, King *Agrippa* and *Cæsar* himself, *chap. xxiv. 24, 25.* and *xxv. 23, &c.* and *xxvi. 24.*) and among my people *Israel*, to whom he should be first sent to preach the glad tidings of salvation (*ver. 20.* and *chap. xiii. 26, 46.*) and that he may

confir

N O T E

* The chief priests are thought to have been the heads of the twenty-four classes of the priests, that took their turns in the ministry, according as it was af-

signed to them by lot, an account which we have, *1 Chron. chap. xix.* the note on *Matth. xxvi. 3.* and *Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 643.

confirm his testimony by miracles, and by various sufferings for my sake, till he shall seal it with his blood.

16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

16 For, that he may know the worst, as well as the best of the case, I will faithfully and plainly acquaint him with the severe persecutions and hardships which he must expect, even to the greatest that he ever inflicted upon others; and which, considering the corruptions of mankind, and their enmity to me; he will unavoidably meet with, and must be contented to undergo, in a dutiful and cheerful subjection to my authority, for my service, and to my glory.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

17 Then *Ananias*, being fully satisfied, went immediately on his message, in obedience to the heavenly vision, without any farther demur, and entered into the house of *Judas*, where *Saul* lodged; (*ver. 11.*) and laying his hands upon him, he spoke to him as to one that was brought into the household of faith and fellowship of the gospel, and was made a child of God, a fellow-labourer in Christ, and a fellow-heir of eternal glory, saying, Brother *Saul*, I am come with good tidings to you; Our great Lord and Saviour, even Jesus, who so graciously and wonderfully appeared * to you in a cloud of glory, as you was on the road hither to persecute his saints, has ordered me to come to you, that by my hands you might be miraculously cured of your present blindness, and that you might be afterwards † still more miraculously filled with the extraordinary gifts, as well as graces, of the Holy Ghost, to qualify you for the great work for which he designs you.

18 And

NOTES.

* Though it is said here, that Jesus appeared to him in the way; it is not necessary to understand it of *Saul's* seeing Christ then in person; but only of his seeing that glorious light in the *Shechitah*, which was the symbol of his presence, as the elders, when they saw God's glory at mount *Horeb*, were said to see the God of *Israel*, though they saw no manner of similitude there. (*Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.* compared with *Deut. iv. 12, 15.*) And yet as *Paul's* qualification for the apostleship required, that he should have seen the Lord; so he expressly affirms that he had seen him; (*1 Cor. ix. 1. and xv. 8.*) and therefore he saw his person before he was made an apostle, which was probably at his second journey to *Jerusalem*, whilst he was praying in the temple, and was in a trance; an account of which is given, *Acts. xxii. 17, 18.* See *Miscellan.*

Sacr. essay iii. p. 4. &c. and p. 11, &c.

† As the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous gifts, was communicated immediately by Christ himself to all his apostles, and perhaps never was conveyed by the hands of any man, except those of the apostles, to others; it seems as if *Saul*, upon his eyes being opened, and his being baptized, received the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts, and that in a visible manner, immediately from Christ himself, as the rest of the apostles did, (*chap. ii. 1, 4.*) and not by the laying on of the hands of *Ananias*, who was only a common ministering disciple, and had nothing of this kind mentioned in his orders, (*ver. 12.*) and when *Paul* afterwards gives an account of this transaction, (*chap. xxii. 12, 13.*) he speaks only of receiving his sight from *Ananias*. See *ibid. essay ii. p. 55, 62.*

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent,

18 And instantly upon *Ananias's* thus speaking and laying his hands upon him, a visible substance, like the scales of a fish, dropped off from his eyes; and he was immediately restored to his sight all at once; which was a lively emblem of the veil's being taken off from his heart, (2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.) and of his soul's being filled with light and joy: And he got up, as *Ananias* had ordered him, (*chap. xxii. 16.*) and was baptized with water, to signify his cleansing from sin, and to testify his faith in Christ, and his subjection and devotedness to him.

19 And when he had eat a proper quantity of food, after his having fasted three days, (*ver. 9.*) which, together with the deep concern of his mind, and his earnestness in religious exercises, had weakened his bodily strength, he was exceedingly refreshed, not merely by his corporal recruits, but chiefly by *the joy of the Lord, which was his strength*, both in the inward and outward man. (*Neb. viii. 10.*) After all this, *Saul* continued some time at *Damascus*; and instead of going to hunt out the Christians, that he might carry them bound to *Jerusalem*, he sought their acquaintance as a friend and brother, and associated with them, to comfort them, and to be comforted by them, who, having had plain and satisfying accounts from him, and from *Ananias*, of the wonderful change the grace of God had made upon him, gladly admitted him into communion with them.

20 And instead of blaspheming the name of the Lord Jesus as formerly, and going to solicit the rulers of the synagogues to exert their power against Christianity, as he had intended, till Christ met him in the way; he immediately resorted to those places of public worship, and there, with abundance of courage and judgment, preached up Jesus as the true Messiah, who was anointed of God the Father, to all the offices of a prophet, priest, and king, declaring him to be, by way of eminence and peculiarity, the Son of God, the same in nature and perfections with the Father: And he was so hearty and zealous in preaching this Saviour, *because he is the Son of God*, (*ὅτι υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*) equal to his great office, and every way worthy of the highest regard.

21 And (*he*) all his numerous auditors were astonished at his doctrine, and said one to another, What a surprising, unaccountable alteration is here! Is not this the very man who persecuted them, even to the death, that made a profession of, and invoked the name of Jesus in their religious worship at *Jerusalem*; and who set out from thence hither, on purpose to seize as many of them as he could meet with here, and

test, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

19 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

and to carry them bound in chains, as criminals, to be judged and punished by the chief priests, and the rest of their brethren of the great council.

21 But whatever harsh constructions and reflections some of them might make, as though he were an apostate, a madman, or an enthusiast; he was so far from recanting, or being disheartened, that he grew exceedingly in his knowledge and judgment of the great things of the gospel; in his affection, zeal, and courage for the cause of Christ; and in his fervent and successful way of preaching him: And he perfectly nonplussed the unbelieving *Jews*, that lived at *Damascus*; confuted all their objections by clear scriptural evidence; and proved by undeniable arguments, that this glorious person, Jesus the Son of God, whom they had crucified, and who was risen from the dead, is indeed the promised and long-expected Messiah. (*Chap. xvii. 2, 3.*)

22 And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.

23 And, soon after this, he retired from thence to *Arabia Deserta*, where he preached Christ to the *Jews* of that country, to whom he had not been made known before; and, about three years afterwards, returned to *Damascus*, (*Gal. i. 15, 18.*) where the *Jews* were so enraged against him for coming to them again, and persisting in what they counted an apostacy, and for his nervous and pathetic way of preaching, and defending the important truths of the gospel, that they consulted together to put him to death.

24 But their lying wait was known of Saul, and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

24 But *Saul* had intelligence of their laying in wait for him, with a murderous design; and so industrious were they to secure him, that they represented him in an invidious and obnoxious light to the then deputy-governor of the city, which was under the dominion of *Aretas*, the king of *Arabia*, and prevailed with him to assist them, by a detachment of soldiers from the garrison, in guarding the gates of the city night and day, that they might apprehend him, in case he should attempt to fly. (See the note on *2 Cor. xi. 32.*)

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

25 Then the disciples of Jesus being apprehensive of the extreme danger of this his faithful servant, and tenderly concerned for his safety, concealed him by day, and took an opportunity one night to let him down privately in a basket, through a window of one of their houses, that stood on the city-wall; and so he escaped his enemies cruel hands. (*2 Cor. xi. 33.*)

26 And, when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself

26 Upon *Saul's* getting safe out of *Damascus*, he went, for the first time since his conversion, to *Jerusalem*, chiefly to confer with *Peter*, who was then at that place; (*Gal. i. 18.*) and when he arrived

self to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

26. But Barnabas, who was a disciple of Saul, and had been with him in Damascus, and had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28. And he was with them coming in, and going out at Jerusalem.

ved thither, his love and zeal put him upon attempting to associate with the persecuted and despised disciples of Christ, and to enter into communion with the church there: But as they had known, by sad experience, his former furious temper and violent practices against them, and had heard little of him since his conversion three years ago, he having mostly spent his time in so distant and unfrequented a country, as *Arabia Deserta*, they were all shy and jealous of him, and afraid to trust him, or to admit him into their religious assemblies; they not being fully satisfied that he was a real convert, but rather suspecting that he came as a spy and informer among them.

27. But *Barnabas*, an eminent disciple*, being well acquainted with the true state of the case, introduced and recommended him to *Peter* and *James*, the only apostles that were then at *Jerusalem*, (*Gal. i. 19.*) and gave them a distinct and particular account, how *Saul*, had seen the glory of the Lord Jesus in his journey to *Damascus*; (*ver. 3.* see the note on *ver. 17.*) how he, at the same time, heard him calling and speaking to him, by name, from heaven; as also what a wonderful change was thereupon wrought on his heart, (*ver. 5, 6, 7.*) and what further passed between Christ and him in his vision and between him and *Ananias*, who had been favoured with another correspondent vision at *Damascus* (*ver. 10,—19.*) and how, by Christ's own authority and commission, he preached him publicly, with great liberty of spirit, holy confidence and courage, (*ver. 20,—22.*) in the synagogues of that city, to the amazement of all that had ever known, or heard of him before, to the joy and establishment of the saints, and to the envy and confusion of all the unbelieving Jews. (*ver. 20,—22.*)

28. Hereupon, the apostles, being fully satisfied about him, gladly received him, and recommended him to the rest of the disciples, as a faithful brother.

NOTES.

* *Barnabas* is afterwards spoken of in the way to *Damascus*, and at the city.

† Some have thought that this narrative was made by *Saul*, but I rather apprehend it to have been made by *Barnabas*, because the construction most naturally carries it that way; and what is said of *Saul's* preaching boldly at *Damascus* was more decent for *Barnabas*, than for himself, to relate to the apostles at *Jerusalem*, though he doubtless confirmed to, and confirmed the truth of, all that *Barnabas* reported concerning him.

and servant of Christ; and he continued with them fifteen days, (*Gal. i. 18.*) accompanying and joining with them in their work and labour, in public places of worship, and in Christian assemblies at *Jerusalem*, where he had before been so notorious for his flaming zeal against, and bitter persecutions of the church.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

29 And during this time, (*παραρταζόμενος ἐλάλει*) he being much enlarged and emboldened in his own spirit, and having great liberty of speech, publicly preached Christ and salvation through him, by virtue of the authority which he had received from him; (*ver. 15, 16.*) and he supported the glorious doctrines of Christ's person and offices, death and resurrection, with great strength of argument, and of answers to objections in disputes, particularly with the Hellenist Jews, (see the note on *John xii. 20.*) whom he had concurred with in *Stephen's* martyrdom, (*Chap. vi. 9, 11. and vii. 58, 59.*) But they were so confounded by his reasoning, and so prejudiced against Christianity, and against him for deserting their party, and being so strenuous an advocate for the faith of Christ, that, instead of embracing it, they contrived to send him after *Stephen*, by putting him also to death.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

30 But (*δι*) when his brethren in Christ understood their wicked design, they conducted him safe to *Cesarea*, the chief city of *Palestine*, and took care to send him from thence, along the sea-coast, to his old friends and acquaintance at *Tarsus*, or, as it is called in the Hebrew tongue, *Tarsibis*, his native place, where he might hope for safety, and where, in fact, he continued preaching the gospel, till *Barnabas* came to him. (*Chap. xi. 25.*)

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

31 Then as *Saul*, who had been a most severe and indefatigable persecutor, was become an eminent and laborious preacher of Christ, and as he was gone from *Jerusalem*, where since his conversion he had so highly exasperated the Jews, they grew less violent in their proceedings against the Christians; and so the churches of Christ had a breathing-time of spiritual and temporal prosperity and peace, (*υπερῆν*) wherever they were planted in *Judea*, *Galilee*, and *Samaria*; and, having freer liberty of the gospel than before, were built up on their most holy faith, in all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and in their union and communion with Christ and one another, being edified together in love; and they persisting in, and living more and more under the power of that religious, new covenant-fear of God, which he had put into their hearts; and being evidently enriched with the consolations that proceeded from the light

and

31 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good

and influence of the Holy Ghost, they increased in numbers, and in all the increases of God. (εὐλαβούμενοι)

32 And Peter taking this favourable opportunity to visit the churches in all those parts, for their further instruction, regulation, and establishment, and particularly for working signal miracles, imparting the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and settling faithful and well-qualified pastors over them, he, among other places, went to the sanctified in Christ Jesus, whose hearts were purified by faith, and who made a holy profession of his name, and resided in a town called Lydda, which lay in Judea, not far from Joppa, (ver. 38.) between Azotus and Casarea, in the way of Philip's progress, after the conversion of the eunuch. (Chap. viii. 40.)

33 And there he providentially met with a certain distressed man, whose name was Eneas, and who had been bed-ridden for eight years past, having lost the use of his limbs, and been laid up with such an inveterate and dangerous palsy, that there was no hope of his recovering in the ordinary use of means:

34 As soon as Peter saw him, he, to prevent all apprehensions, as though there were any virtue in himself to heal him, said to him, Eneas, I declare, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the exalted Saviour of Israel, that he, at this instant, puts forth his almighty power, to restore you to perfect health and strength: And as Christ, in the days of his flesh, used to order them, whom he miraculously cured, to do something that might evidence it to the company; so, for the same purpose, I order you, by his authority, to get up from your bed, and make it with your own hands; accordingly he did so, without delay, in the sight of all then present.

35 And such a blessing attended the gospel, as thus confirmed, that great multitudes of the inhabitants of Lydda; and of the adjacent town, and large fruitful valley of Saron, of whom it was prophesied, (Isa. xxxv. 2.) that they should see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God, saw the wonderful cure that Christ had wrought upon this cripple, and were so affected with it, as to yield themselves up to the Lord Jesus, and follow him in all his ways.

36 Now at Joppa, a neighbouring sea-port town, there was a certain believer in Christ, whose name, in the Syriac language, was Tabitha, and in the Greek, Dorcas, both of which signify a hind or roe; this Christian matron abounded in acts of piety toward God, as fruits of her faith and love, and in works of righteousness, and of charity to the poor, for

good works, and
alms-deeds which
she did.

for whom she provided garments to clothe them, which she wrought with her own hands, and generously disposed of, in her great compassion, to such as needed them.

37 And it came
to pass in those
days, that she was
sick, and died :
whom when they
had washed, they
laid her in an up-
per chamber.

37 And Providence so ordered it, for the greater manifestation of God's glory, that, during *Peter's* abode in those parts, this good woman fell sick and died ; after which her friends, according to the custom of the ancients, washed her dead corpse, and laid it out in an upper room, in order to its interment.

38 And so far-
much as Lydda
was nigh to Jop-
pa, and the disci-
ples had heard that
Peter was there,
they sent unto him
two men, desiring
him that he would
not delay to come
to them.

38 But (*ds*) *Lydda* being within about five or six miles of *Joppa*, and some of her acquaintance and fellow-Christians, who were greatly concerned at the loss of such an excellent and useful woman, hearing that the apostle *Peter* was at *Joppa*, and had wrought a wonderful miracle there, they sent two of their number, as their messengers unto him, to beg earnestly of him, in all their names, that he would be so kind as to come with all possible dispatch to them, on an important occasion, * to help and comfort them in their sorrowful circumstances.

39 Then *Peter*
arose, and went
with them. When
he was come, they
brought him into
the upper cham-
ber: and all the wi-
dows stood by him,
weeping, and shew-
ing the coats and
garments which
Dorcas made while
she was with them.

39 Upon the messengers delivering their errand, *Peter* readily consented, and went along with them ; and being come to *Joppa*, and to the friends that had sent for him thither, they conducted him to the upper room, where the dead corpse of *Dorcas* lay prepared for its funeral: And there he found the poor widows, that had been bountifully relieved by her labour and liberality, standing and weeping over her, with great lamentation for their loss of such a generous benefactress ; and, at his coming into the room, they flocked about him, and, to move his compassion, spoke highly of her great virtues and usefulness, and shewed him the gowns and petticoats, and other garments on their backs, which she had employed herself in making, and with which she had, in her great generosity and goodness, clothed them, at free cost, while she was living.

40 But *Peter* put
them all forth, and
kneeled down and
prayed, and turn-
ing him to the bo-
dy, said, Tabitha,
arise.

40 Then *Peter* (*ds*) desired them all to withdraw, that, like his Lord and Master, he might avoid all appearance of vain-glory, and that he might have the greater liberty and freedom in wrestling with God in prayer, for the restoration of such an useful person to life,

NOTE

* They, probably, hoped, that he who had restored *Aeneas* to his limbs, might restore *Dorcas* to life; the divine power of Christ, which had done one by his hands, being equally capable of doing the other: Or they might send for

him to assist their improvement of the as-
fecting providence, to the glory of God,
and their own edification and comfort,
in such a way as *Peter* might be direct-
ed to, and enabled for, without prescri-
bing to him.

arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

life, and for the confirmation of the gospel thereby; and being alone, he kneeled down, and addressed the throne of grace in that humble posture, with faith in the Lord Jesus; and then being assured, by a divine impulse, that his prayer was answered, he turned himself about to the dead corpse, and speaking, as usual, (*ver. 34. and chap. iii. 6. and iv. 30.*) in the name of Christ *, he, after his example, (*Mark v. 4.*) said, *Tabitha, Arise from the dead*: And the Lord Jesus attended these words with such power, that she immediately opened her eyes, which death had closed; and, seeing the apostle by her, raised herself up into a sitting posture.

41 And he gave her his hand, and lift her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

41 And he, reaching out his hand, assisted her rising upon her feet; and then, calling in her religious acquaintance, and the poor widows, who so greatly bewailed their loss of her, he set her before them, and made them a most acceptable present of their great benefactress and friend, alive and well, to their abundant joy.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

42 And as soon as this wonderful miracle was known, as it quickly was through all the town, a great multitude were brought over to believe in the Lord Jesus, by whose divine power it was wrought; and they were made obedient to the faith.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

43 And as Christ had further work to do by Peter at this place, till he should be called from thence to other service among the proselytes of the gate, (*chap. x.*) Providence ordered his staying at Joppa for some time, where he took up his abode, not at Tabitha's house, (where he might have been liberally entertained) lest he should seem to receive a reward from her; but contenting himself with meaner fare, he went and lodged at a tanner's, whose name was Simon, and whose house was by the sea-side. (*Chap. x. 6.*)

RECOLUTIONS.

What undeniable and glorious proofs hath our dear Lord and Saviour given of his exaltation to his heavenly kingdom! He has appeared and spoke from heaven with divine Majesty and glory, and has made a believing and authoritative use of his name, as effectual, for healing the sick, and raising the dead, as if he were visibly present.

NOTE.

* Though Peter's expression, in this case, is much in the same form with that which our blessed Lord used in raising Jairus's daughter to life, (*Mark v. 41.*) yet his way of working this miracle was entirely different from that: For he first kneeled down and prayed, and so referred the matter to God, and applied to him with acknowledgments that it depended on his power and will; and when

he spoke to Tabitha to arise, he did not speak as from himself: Whereas our Lord behaved in his whole conduct, in the other case, as usual, with an air of absolute sovereignty by his own power and will, without taking the least notice of God his Father, and spoke to the young damsel in his own name; *I say unto thee, Arise*. See the notes on *John ii. 1.* and *xi. 41.*

fully present to exert his divine power in commanding health to one, and life to another; and he produces the like effects upon diseased and dead souls: And O how sovereign and victorious is his grace; and what a wonderful change does it make upon the heart and life! It strikes the most daring sinner, like *Saul*, into trembling and astonishment; stops him in his full career of wickedness, and makes him cry out, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? It gives him an heart to pray, and to follow divine directions and commands; and it turns a furious persecutor into a zealous preacher of Christ; and whilst others are amazed, some with joy, and some with envy, at such a visible alteration on the sincere convert, he is the more emboldened and strengthened, to the silencing and confounding of all that oppose him: And though the disciples of Christ themselves may at first be jealous of him, and afraid to countenance and embrace him, lest he should be a spy and a hypocrite, or a wolf in sheep's clothing; yet with what cheerfulness and satisfaction will they receive him, when the truth of grace appears in him! Christ is never at a loss for instruments to carry on his work; he will either find or make them, and take off all their objections, difficulties, and discouragements; and though his and their enemies may lie in wait to destroy them, he will make a way for their escape, till he has accomplished his designs by them. And, O how easily can he turn the threatenings and slaughter of his church, which he takes as done against himself, into rest and peace, and fill them with the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, that they may be both multiplied and edified! And with what pleasure and hope will the faithful servants of Christ visit such churches, to impart still further benefits to them! Their ministrations shall be attended with the power of the Holy Ghost, to turn many to the Lord, and add an abundant establishment to the saints. And O what an honour is it to Christ, and to the saints themselves, and to their holy profession of his name, when, for their eminence in religion and liberality, their lives, like *Dorcas's*, are greatly desired, and their deaths as much lamented!

C H A P. X.

Cornelius, a Roman officer, being directed in a vision, sends for Peter, 1,—8. Peter, being encouraged in a correspondent vision, goes to Cornelius, though a Gentile, 9,—23. The discourse that passed between them, in which Peter preached Christ to him, 24,—42. The Holy Ghost falls on Cornelius and his friends, and thereupon they are baptized, 43,—48.

TEXT.

THERE was a certain man in Caesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band.

PARAPHRASE.

THE gospel having, by this time, been preached about seven years to the native *Jews*, and the proselytes of righteousness, and to the *Samaritans*; God would now introduce it among the *Gentiles*, beginning with the *proselytes of the gate*, in order to its spreading, by degrees, to the uttermost part of the earth. (Chap. i. 8.) Accordingly there was at *Caesarea*, so called in honour to *Augustus Caesar*, where *Philip* had been preaching to the *Jews*, (chap. viii. 40.) a certain man named *Cornelius*, who was a *Roman* captain over an hundred soldiers belonging to an *Italian* regiment, (*στρατηγία*) which were placed under a governor there, to support the imperial authority over that people, which consisted of *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*.

1 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

2 This man, though an uncircumcised Gentile (chap. xi. 3.) was a sincere * proselyte of the gate; a man of a devotional temper of mind; and one that worshipped the true God of Israel, revered his name, and feared to offend him; and, like Abraham and Joshua, (Gen. xviii. 19. and Josh. xxiv. 15.) was exemplary in keeping up religion in his family, which owned and believed in the same God with himself; he likewise was of a very charitable disposition, distributing with great liberality to the necessities of the poor, whether they were Jews or Gentiles; and he conscientiously observed the Israelites stated hours of prayer, morning and evening, in his daily addresses to God.

3 He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

3 While he was one day praying, about three o'clock in the afternoon, he, being fully awake, had a clear vision, with his bodily eyes, of a glorious angel of the Lord, who appeared to him in the form of a man, surrounded with rays of light, (ver. 30.) as Gabriel formerly did to Daniel, at the same time of the evening oblation, when he was employed in the like religious manner; (Dan. ix. 21.) and to shew the special notice God took of him, he called to him by name, saying, Cornelius!

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

4 But (ð) when Cornelius looked at the angel, he was filled with reverent awe, and great surprise; and, addressing him with the respect due to a messenger from the heavenly world, said, Lord, What is the meaning of this extraordinary appearance? Art thou come in mercy, or in wrath? What is thy will and pleasure? and the angel, to comfort and encourage him, replied, All is well, your spiritual sacrifices of prayer, and liberality to the poor, (Psal. iv. 18. and Heb. xiii. 15, 16.) are graciously accepted of God, as tokens of your faith and love, according to your present

N O T E.

* As the proselytes of righteousness were accounted clean, and were admitted to all the privileges of natural Jews; and Cornelius was deemed an unclean Gentile, (ver. 28.) for going in to whom the Jews were highly offended with the apostle Peter, (chap. xi. 2, 3, &c.) and he, in vindication of himself, spoke of it, as God's first visiting the Gentiles. (Chap. xv. 14.) It is commonly, and I think justly, concluded, that Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate. (See the note on chap. viii. 27.) For as praying to God alway, signified observing the Jewish hours of prayer, every day at the third and ninth hour, or at nine o'clock in the morning, and three in the afternoon, as

appears from ver. 3. and from Luke xxi. 53. compared with Acts ii. 46, 47. and iii. 1.; so he observed the hours of temple-service; and his being called (ὁσους και φοβουμενος τον Θεον) a devout man, and one that feared God, is a description of that sort of proselytes who are promiscuously spoken of, chap. xiii. 16, 26, 43. as (φοβουμενοι τον Θεον, and εὐσεβευσαι προσκαλυτοι) persons that feared God, and were devout or religious proselytes; accordingly the apostle Paul alleged the prophecies of the Old Testament to them, as what they were acquainted with, which he never did in preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles.

present light, more than if you had presented a memorial of incense, and a meat-offering made by fire, which are spoken of as a sweet savour to the Lord. (*Lev. ii. 2, 9. and vi. 15.*)

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 5 And as you need a further revelation of the mind and will of God, to direct your faith to the only true Messiah, and to lead you into the way of salvation by him; and as he has appointed to communicate it to you, not by the ministry of angels, but of men of like passions with yourself, that their terrors may not make you afraid, and that the excellency of the power, which attends their ministrations, may the more evidently appear to be of God, (*2 Cor. iv. 7.*) I am commissioned to order you to send messengers immediately to Joppa, the town from whence the prophet *Jonah* was sent to preach to the *Gentiles* at *Nineveh*, (*Jonah i. 2, 3.*) and fetch from thence a certain man, who is commonly known by the name of *Simon*, and whom his Lord surnamed *Peter*, on account of the use he would make of him, in laying the foundation of the Christian church. (*Matth. xvi. 18, 19.*)

6 He lodgeth with one Simon tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou wishest to do. 6 That you may not mistake the man, and may be thoroughly satisfied, that this is a divine direction, I am further to tell you, that he now sojourns there, as a guest with his name-sake *Simon*, who is by trade a tanner, and whose house stands on the shore of the *Mediterranean* sea: He shall acquaint you with those things*, which, according to the present new dispensation of God's grace, are necessary for you to know and do, in order to your being eternally saved. (*Chap. xi. 14.*)

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited upon him continual- 7 As soon as the angel had delivered his message, he disappeared; and *Cornelius* being fully satisfied, as to the reality and vast importance of what he had seen and heard, and earnestly desirous of learning the way of salvation, he immediately, in obedience to the heavenly vision, called to him two of his own domestic servants, and one of his soldiers, who, like himself, was a religious proselyte, and therefore so highly in favour with him, as to be usually employed in waiting upon him.

8 And when he had 8 And these being all trusty men, whom he could depend

NOTE

* Though *Cornelius*, being a proselyte, is to be supposed to have believed the promised and expected Messiah, and that, in former dispensations, was sufficient for salvation: yet after Christ actually appeared, and finished the work of redemption, and published the gospel, it was further necessary, that his faith should be directed to, and should terminate on him particularly, as the only Saviour: (*chap. ix. 12.*) And as the ordinary means, by which God brings any to this faith, is the preaching of the gospel; (*Rom. x. 14.—17.*) so he would rather dispatch an angel from heaven to direct this religious proselyte to those means, than not honour his own institution of the gospel-ministry.

had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour.

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

depend upon, and for whose salvation he was concerned, as well as for his own, he related to them all that had passed in the vision, that they might go the more cheerfully on his errand, and be the more urgent with Peter to come to him: Accordingly he ordered them to set out the next morning for Joppa; (ver. 9.) it being then too late for them to perform the journey that night.

9 Now, that Peter might be the better disposed to receive and comply with their message, notwithstanding his prejudices against conversing with, and preaching to uncircumcised Gentiles, Providence wisely ordered, that whilst, on the morrow after the vision, the messengers were on the road, and arrived near to the town, unknown to him, he, according to the example of David and Daniel, who used to pray three times a-day, (Psal. lv. 17. and Dan. x. 10.) went up about noon, to the flat roof of the house, (see the note on Mat. xxiv. 17.) to spend some time in secret prayer, that the word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified.

10 And, during this devout retirement, he was exceeding hungry, and wanted to eat something for the refreshment of nature; but while dinner was preparing, he suddenly fell into a supernatural ecstacy of mind, (ver. 10.) the external senses being at the same time as much locked up as if he had been asleep, which was one of the ways wherein God had used to reveal himself to his servants of old.

11 And, in answer to his prayer, a visionary presentation, suitable to his situation and hungry circumstances, was made to him from an opening in the heavens, to intimate that the light and authority conveyed thereby, came from God to unfold the mystery about the calling of the Gentiles, which had not been clearly made known in former ages. (Eph. iii. 3, 4.) He likewise saw, with the eyes of his mind, a sort of great bag descending from thence toward himself, in the form of a large sheet, with its four corners gathered and tied together, and, (ver. 11.) as divinely sent, it gradually dropped down just before him, near the roof of the house, toward the earth, to intimate that the gospel-church should be collected from the four quarters of the world.

12 In the open sides of the sheet, he saw all sorts of tame and wild beasts, and other animals, that, instead of walking, crept on the earth, as also birds that fly in the air, some of all which were, by legal institution, ceremonially clean, and others unclean. God thereby intending to instruct him, that all sorts of sinners, and persons of all nations, should be accepted.

ceptable to him, through the faith of Jesus, under the gospel-state. (*ver. 35.*)

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

13 And a voice from heaven attended the vision, which called to him by name, saying, *Peter*, Get up, slay and eat, freely and indifferently, of any of these living creatures that are set before you, without asking questions for conscience sake.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

14 But *Peter* being startled at the proposal, and apprehending that this voice came from Christ, only for his trial, replied, No, Lord, may I never venture upon such a transgression! I dare not make this use of all these creatures promiscuously; for my conscience will not suffer me to feed upon any thing, that is forbidden by the law of *Moses*, and so is justly reputed unclean; neither have I ever hitherto done it.

15 And the voice made unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

15 Then the voice, being directed to him a second time, said, God's authority can supersede the ceremonial distinction, that was made by his own appointment, between things legally clean and unclean, for a time, and for certain emblematical reasons, suitable to the Old Testament-dispensation; and he is now, agreeable to the gospel-state, putting an end to the distinction itself, and to that which was peculiarly signified by it; meaning that all meats should henceforth be used indifferently, and *Gentiles* should be taken into God's covenant, promiscuously with the *Jews*: Accordingly the voice said more expressly, What God has sanctified for your use, and for his own praise, you must no longer reckon to be unlawful or unclean; thereby designing to shew him, that God had taken away the prohibitions concerning some kinds of meat, and the difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which was kept up by means of those positive laws; so that *Peter* might safely eat any thing that should be set before him, and ought freely to converse with, and preach the gospel to, the un-circumcised *Gentiles*.

16 This was done three: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

16 This wonderful scene was repeated three times, one after another, to assure him that the vision was certain, and to engage his attention to it; and then the great bag was drawn up from the earth to heaven, to signify that believing sinners of all ranks, degrees, and nations, should be received up to glory.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean; behold, the vessels which were sent

17 Now when the vision was over, as *Peter* was seriously debating, and at a loss in his own thoughts about the meaning of what had been, in so surprising a manner, presented to him, God having not yet explained it, observe how admirably the wisdom of Providence ordered a concurrence of circumstances to satisfy him about it; The messengers that were

sent from Cornelius, had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

17 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

18 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

19 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

20 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

21 And they said,

were sent by *Cornelius*, having inquired out the house of *Simon* the tanner, at which *Peter* lodged: were then arrived, and actually standing at the door, or porch. (*πυλῶνα*)

18 And speaking to some of the family, they desired to know of them, whether one *Simon*, a certain famous man, whose surname was *Peter*, dwelt there, and were within; and whether he were at leisure for them to wait upon him, or not.

19 Whilst, I say, *Peter* was ruminating upon the vision, and perplexed in his mind about it, as the virgin *Mary* was when the angel saluted her, (*Luke* i. 29.) the Spirit of the Lord, by an extraordinary afflatus, powerfully and distinctly suggested to him an unexpected fact, and some thoughts upon it, which naturally led the way to his understanding the design of the vision, saying, Observe something now occurs, that will explain what you have seen and heard; At this very instant, three men are come up to the door of this house, with an important-errand to you, and are inquiring after you.

20 Make haste therefore, and go down to them, and, though they are uncircumcised *Gentiles*, make no scruple of freely conversing, and going along with them, as if it were unlawful, or inexpedient; and fear not any danger from the men you are to go with, nor from the *Jews*, on that account: For these men are come in consequence of express orders*, which I have given to their master, who has sent them on a special message to you; and this shall be your sufficient warrant for complying with their request, whatever others may object against it.

21 Then *Peter*, being fully satisfied, that what he had seen and heard, in so extraordinary a manner was from God, went down immediately, in obedience to the heavenly order, to speak with the messengers that were come from *Cornelius*, and to learn all he could from them, that might give him further light about the special and determinate meaning of the vision; and in order thereunto, as soon as he saw them, who by this time had just arrived at the house (*chap.* xi. 11.) he said, Behold, I am the man whom ye have been inquiring for: On what account, I pray you, are ye come hither, and what is your business with me?

22 And they replied, Our errand to you, Sir,

N O T E.

* The Spirit's saying that he had sent these messengers, was taking upon himself the stile and work of God, who dispatched the angel to *Cornelius*, to order him to send them to *Peter*: and as these were personal and divine actions of the Holy Ghost, they shew him to be such a person as is also God.

old, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

this, *Cornelius* a Roman officer, who has an hundred soldiers under his command, a man of great probity, who, though an uncircumcised *Gentile*, is a profelyte of the gate, and a very religious worshipper of the God of *Israel*, and has an universally good character, for piety, justice, and charity, among the *Jews* themselves; while this worthy person was praying in his house, at one of the *Jewish* hours of devotion, (*ver.* 30.) he was favoured with an heavenly vision of an holy angel, whom God dispatched to him, and by whom he ordered him to send messengers to you by name; telling him the very house where you lodged, (*ver.* 6.) and that you, coming to him, should give him instructions about the way of salvation. (*Chap.* xi. 14.)

23 Then he courteously invited the men, though they were but servants, to walk further into the house; and entertained them there that night, that he might shew his hospitality to them, and might have the better opportunity of informing himself, yet more fully, about *Cornelius's* character, and what had passed between the angel and him. And the next morning *Peter*, without any hesitancy in his own mind, cheerfully went along with them to their master; and six of his Christian brethren, *Jewish* converts at *Joppa*, attended him, (*chap.* xi. 12.) that they might shew their respect, and be assistant, if needful, to him; but chiefly that they might have the benefit of his conversation, and be eye-witnesses of what might pass between the centurion and him, and vindicate it afterwards to the *Jewish* Christians, if there should be occasion.

24 And in the afternoon of the day, (*ver.* 30.) which followed their setting out from *Joppa*, they arrived at *Cæsarea*; and, going to *Cornelius's* house, found him waiting in expectation of them; and with him, several of his relations and most intimate friends and acquaintance, whom he, like a good man, who was concerned for their salvation, as well as his own, had got together, that they might partake of the important instructions, which he hoped would be communicated to them.

25 And as *Peter* was entering the house, *Cornelius*, having notice of his arrival, ran with great eagerness to meet, and bid him welcome; and, throwing himself down prostrate at his feet, he expressed the highest reverence for him*, as one sent in an

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extraordinary

NOTE

* It seems, by *Peter's* answer that it was not merely such civil respect as was usually paid to great men; but that it

was religious adoration, which *Cornelius* offered to him, whom he possibly took for the Messiah, or for an incarnate God.

But

extraordinary manner from God, with a special message of the utmost consequence to him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

26 But the apostle *Peter*, detesting all appearance of religious adoration being offered to a creature, instantly stretched forth his hand, and raised him up from the ground, saying, with holy resentment, and jealousy for the divine glory, Get up immediately; such homage as this is not due to me, neither will I receive it: For I myself, like you, am no more than a mere man, though honoured with a commission from God to his people, and now particularly to you.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

27 Hereupon, still further to take off the centurion's fear, and increase his hopes, he conversed familiarly with him. (*συνημιλον αὐτῷ*) though he was an uncircumcised *Gentile*; and, going into the house, he met with a considerable number of people, who were gathered together there, by *Cornelius's* invitation, (*ver. 24.*) to hear what the apostle had to say to them.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

28 Then, to take off the prejudices of the company, who might wonder to see him so free in talking with an uncircumcised *Gentile*, he said, Ye doubtless cannot but be very sensible, that the *Mosaic* law having made a difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the strained interpretations, and the traditions of the elders, have so far widened the breach between them, as to pronounce it an abominable crime (*ἀσέβημα*) for any native *Jew*, to associate with, or come, in a friendly and familiar manner, into the house and company of one of a different nation and religion; and I have long been of that opinion myself: But God, having set up a new dispensation of grace, hath, within these two days past, fully assured me, by a divine and undoubted vision, that all distinctions of nations are now to have an end, and that no man is any longer to be excluded from his covenant, or to be deemed profane, or even ceremonially impure, merely on account of his being a *Gentile*.

29 Therefore came I unto you without gain saying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what

29 I therefore readily came to offer my service to you, without any further scruple or objection in my own mind against it, as soon as ever I perceived by the messengers, (whom I met with immediately after, and according to, the intimations given me in the vision, *ver. 19, 20, 21.*) that I was sent for, and that

N O T E.

But whether it were civil or religious worship, which I have left undetermined in the Paraphrase; *Peter* took that opportunity to shew his own modesty, and his utter detestation of every thing, that carried the least appearance of giv-

ing that honour to a creature, which is due to God only; as the angel did, when the apostle *John*, under something of a like mistake of him for Christ, offered to worship him. *Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.*

what intent ye have sent for me, that God would have me come hither: And now, that I may be more fully and particularly led into his mind and will in this case, I beg you would please to tell me plainly, what were your motives and ends in sending for me, and what is it that ye expect from me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

30 Then *Cornelius* rehearsed the whole matter to him, and said, Being convinced in my conscience, that the God of *Israel* is the only true God, I stately worship him at the *Jewish* hours of prayer, and am a careful observer of every other duty of a moral nature, such as fasting and alms-deeds, which I desire to perform in such a manner, as may be most acceptable to God, waiting for still further light about his will: Accordingly, for the greater solemnity of my devotion, and deeper humiliation of my soul before the Lord, I four days ago kept a fast, and continued without tasting any thing, till this hour of the day, and at three of the clock in the afternoon, when, you know, the evening sacrifices are offering in the *Jewish* temple, I went to prayer in my family*, who are likewise worshippers of the same God with myself; (ver. 2.) and, immediately upon my having prayed for divine guidance in his ways, he, to my awful, and yet happy surprise, mercifully favoured me with the vision of an angel, who, whilst I was broad awake, stood by me in the form of a man, arrayed with splendid robes of glory, like an inhabitant of the heavenly world.

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

31 And he accosted me in the most friendly and encouraging manner, saying, *Cornelius*, your humble petition for further discoveries of God, and of the way of salvation, is graciously heard and answered; and your charitable distributions to the poor are had in favourable remembrance before the throne of God, who sees your very heart, and the principles, motives, and ends, that influence and govern you.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

32 I therefore am dispatched from heaven, to order you to send messengers forthwith to the town called *Joppa*; and there let them inquire for one *Simon*, who is surnamed *Peter*, and desire him to come hither: And, to assure you that this is a divine admonition, and that they may certainly find him, I now tell you, that he is at present entertained, as a guest, in the house of another *Simon*, who is a tanner by trade, and lives upon the sea-shore there: He is commissioned of God to declare his mind and will; and, when he

N O T E.

* ΟΙΚΟΝ μου in my house, answers to and therefore it was probably not secret, and αυτου with his house, (ver. 2.) or closet, but family prayer, that the where it manifestly signifies his family; centurion was then engaged in.

he comes, he will direct you to the only Saviour, and shew you the way to eternal life through him.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

33 Hereupon I, in obedience to the heavenly vision, sent to you without delay; and you have been exceeding kind to us, as well as faithful to your great Lord, in coming hither: And since you are now come, by divine order, with a message of the utmost consequence, we all, whom you see assembled together, are met in a religious manner to present ourselves before God, in his fear, and with hope in his mercy, looking upon ourselves to be under his immediate eye, and in his special presence, who knows our hearts, that we may seriously attend unto, and readily receive every thing, without exception, which he has commissioned you to deliver to us, whether it be agreeable to our former sentiments, and our temporal interests, or not.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

34 Then *Peter*, comparing the two visions together, was fully satisfied, that God thereby designed to intimate, that the gospel should be no longer confined to the *Jewish* nation; accordingly he began to speak to *Cornelius* and his friends, with great seriousness and earnestness, courage and freedom, as the Lord gave him utterance, saying, Whatsoever my former prejudices were, I am now abundantly assured, that the great God has broken down the middle wall of partition, which was between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and no longer regards with favour, or rejects with abhorrence, any persons whatsoever, merely on account of their nation, family, or external circumstances.

35 But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness,

35 But of what country or people soever they be, the man * who, like a *Gentile* proselyte, though uncircumcised, is a religious worshipper of the true God, and attends to the duties of moral obligation, such as fasting

N O T E

* This seems to be a plain description of proselytes of the gate, such as *Cornelius* and his house were. (See the note on ver. 2.) But as *Peter* had no notion, as yet, of the gospel's being preached to the idolatrous *Gentiles* for their salvation, he cannot reasonably be supposed to have meant, that all persons who served God according to their present light, whatsoever their religion were, should be accepted of him to eternal life: And the apostle *Peter's* being sent to *Cornelius*, to tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved, (chap. xi. 14.) intimates, that even they were not already in a state of salvation, according to the tenor of the gospel; but were to be brought into it, by means of the gospel. I therefore take it, that the ac-

ceptance, here spoken of, relates chiefly, if not only, to the proselytes of the gate being so far accepted of God, as to be admitted to an enjoyment of the privilege of the gospel for their own salvation; and that their fearing God, and working righteousness, as far as it went, was agreeable to the perfections and will of God, though it did not give them a claim to eternal life, any more than the penitent and becoming behaviour of a condemned rebel, which is pleasing to his prince, can entitle him to a pardon of his crime, and to high favour and honours in his kingdom; but, for wise ends of government, the prince may nevertheless order him to be executed for his rebellion.

ness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (he is Lord of all.)

37 That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached:

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.

fasting and alms-deeds, which are a part of righteousness, (*Psal. cxiii. 9.*) as well as prayer, is so far agreeable to the divine perfections and will, and so far accepted of God, as to be freely admitted to hear and receive the gospel, in order to his being saved.

36 Even that gospel, which God has sent by the ministrations of his servants, in the first place, and hitherto only, to the *Jews*, (*μαρτυροῦμεν*) preaching the glad tidings of the noblest peace, inclusive of reconciliation with himself, and of all spiritual harmony and happiness, through the merit and mediation of the anointed Saviour. (He, as a divine person, is the author, proprietor, and governor of the whole creation, all things being made by him and for him; (*Col. i. 16.*) and he, as vested with office-authority in human nature, has power over all flesh; and, being exalted far above all principality and power, is head over all things to the church, (*Eph. i. 21, 22.*) has all persons and things on earth, and all the devils in hell, under his command and controul; is Lord of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and will be the universal Judge at the last day.)

37 Ye who live in *Palestine*, which has been for several years the grand stage of action relating to the Messiah, must needs know something of this word of peace, which was spread abroad, and early talked of, in all the cities, towns, and villages of *Judea*, pursuant to its having been first published in *Galilee*: And this was soon after *John the Baptist* had prepared the way for it, by his baptizing with water, and preaching the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, through the approaching Messiah, (*Mark i. 4.*) whom he at length openly shewed, and recommended once and again to the people, that they might believe in him. (*John i. 29,—36.*)

38 Ye, I say, cannot but have heard at least, how apparently, powerfully, and remarkably, God the Father consecrated, authorized, and qualified that famous person for the Messiah's office, by a visible descent and unmeasurable effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him at his baptism, who was commonly known by the name of Jesus of *Nazareth*, and was indeed brought up at that city, (*Luke iv. 16.*) and who thereupon travelled about from place to place, and laboured indefatigably, by his preaching and miracles, in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, and in relieving and recovering, not only those that were sick with divers diseases, but even all that were corporally possessed and cruelly tormented by the devil, and were brought to him for a cure: (*Luke iv. 40, 41.* and *Mat. iv. 24.* where see the note.) For, as is abundantly evident

dent from all this, God was singularly present to concur with, and shew his approbation of, this wonderful Saviour.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly,

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

39 And we, the apostles of this great and glorious Lord, together with many others of his disciples, were eye and ear-witnesses of all the great and beneficent things which he spake and did in all the provinces of *Israel*, and particularly in *Jerusalem* itself; where, at a time of general concourse, the *Jews* barbarously insulted, abused, and vilified him, till at length they murdered him, by putting him to the most ignominious, painful, and accursed death of the cross, without the gates of the city, as the bodies of the sacrifices, which typified him, were burnt without the camp. (*Heb. xiii. 11, 12.*)

40 But still, to shew that he was accepted of God his Father, not only in all that he had said and done, but likewise in his sufferings unto death, and that reconciliation was made, and Divine Justice was fully satisfied thereby, for the sins of all that should believe in him, God, in a judicial capacity, took him from prison and from judgment, (*Isa. liii. 8.*) by raising him on the third day from the dead: And to encourage and confirm our faith in him, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, (*Rom. iv. 25.*) his Father (*ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ ὁ θεός*) granted that he should be manifested alive, after his passion, to a great number of persons in the most visible and demonstrative manner.

41 Not, indeed, as he was before, and at his crucifixion, to the whole multitude of the *Jews*, the rulers, priests, and common people in general: Nor, they had despised and obstinately rejected him, in defiance of the plentiful evidence he had given of his being the true Messiah; and when plain informations were afterwards given them of his being risen, according to his own predictions, some of them contrived and others joined in entertaining and propagating a senseless and malicious story to stifle the belief of it (*Matth. xxviii. 11,—15.*) and so forfeited the privilege of ever seeing him again, and shewed themselves to be resolutely determined, not to be convinced at any rate whatsoever: But God, in his infinite wisdom and grace, ordered his appearing corporally to a sufficient number of proper and unexceptionable witnesses, who had been strongly prejudiced against, and were very hardly brought to believe his resurrection, even to above five hundred brethren at once (*1 Cor. xv. 6.*) as well as, at several other times, to such as had all along attended him, and were perfectly acquainted with him, and had been before appointed

and set apart by God himself and our Saviour, (*John* xv. 16,) to testify his doctrine and miracles, death and resurrection, even to us the apostles, who, accordingly, not only saw and heard him, (*1 John* i. 1.) but also, several times, and once particularly, upon his own kind invitation to a dinner, did eat and * drink with him in a familiar manner, (*John* xxi. 12, 13.) after he by his own, as well as by his Father's power, had rose from the dead. (*John* ii. 19, 21. and x. 18.)

41 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

42 And our risen Lord himself gave us a special charge and commission to preach his gospel, in due season, to every reasonable creature, through the whole world, as we might have opportunity for it; (*Mark* xvi. 15.) and (as he further explained his commission) *to be his witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.* (*Chap.* i. 8.) † And he particularly ordered us to declare, that he is the true and long-expected Messiah; to whom God the Father *has committed all judgment*, (*John* v. 22.) relating to the temporal and eternal concerns of the children of men; and whom he has appointed to have the honour, in that nature which was crucified, of being the Judge of the whole world, both of all that are now living, and that are already dead; and of all that shall be found alive or dead at his second appearing.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.

43 And as he is infinitely worthy of this honour, so it is matter of great encouragement to think, that he will be our judge at last: For, to refer you to writings which ye, as proselytes of the gate, are conversant with, the general current of the ancient divinely inspired prophets, in all their records of typical sacrifices and predictions of the Messiah's atoning death, centers in this, that through his mediation, on account of his merit and righteousness, and by his advocacy and authority, every one, be he *Jew or Gentile*, a greater or lesser sinner, who, under a deep and humble sense of his own guilt and danger, heartily approves of, embraces, and relies upon him,

23

NOTES.

* Christ eat in the presence of the apostles, (*Luke* xxiv. 43.) and, it seems, they eat with him once at *Emmaus*, (*Luke* xxiv. 30.) and another time at the *Fea of Galilee*; (*John* xxi. 9.—15.) and as the expressions there used were commonly put for a whole meal, (see *Matth.* xv. 2. and *Luke* vii. 36.) so the apostle *Peter*, who was present, at least in two of these interviews, here assures us, that they drank, as well as eat with him.

† Though Christ's order to the apostles to testify this concerning him, is not expressly recorded in any of the evangelists; yet, as in the forty days that he was seen of them, between his resurrection and ascension to heaven, he spoke of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (*Chap.* i. 3.) so the apostle *Peter* here tells us that this was one of those things.

as the divine and only Saviour, without whom he must be lost for ever, shall be actually, and completely forgiven all his iniquities, be they ever so heinous or many; and so shall stand before his judge with safety and joy at the great day.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

44 While the apostle *Peter* was warmly, and authoritatively declaring these solemn and delightful things concerning Christ; the Holy Ghost at that very instant, set in with his words, to own them, and make them effectual; insomuch that he descended with miraculous gifts and powers*, as well as gracious influences, upon the whole company of *Gentile* proselytes, that were there present to hear the gospel.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

45 And the six believing *Jews*, even all that accompanied *Peter* in his journey to this place, were exceedingly struck with surprise, at such an unexpected and extraordinary event; because, directly contrary to all their notions about their own prerogative and the abandoned state of the nations round about them, the Holy Ghost was abundantly shed down as the free gift of God, in a miraculous way, on *Cornelius* and all his *Gentile* friends, in like manner as he had been before on *Jewish* converts, which was undeniably manifest by its supernatural effects.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

46 For these believing *Jews* heard these uncircumcised *Gentiles* utter themselves in various languages, which they had never learnt before; and were eyewitnesses of their extolling the praises of the Lord

NOTES.

* Since it is said in the next verse but one, (ver. 46.) that *they spake with tongues*, and in chap. xi. 15. that *the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on the apostles at the beginning*; some have thought, that the Holy Ghost descended upon them with a sound of a mighty rushing wind, and in a visible appearance of cloven tongues of fire, as he did at first on the *Jewish* disciples: (chap. ii. 2, 3.) But if it were so, the believing *Jews*, being present in the room, must needs have known it; and it is much that no express notice was taken of this: However, it is certain, that the Holy Ghost was poured out upon *Cornelius* and his friends, in miraculous gifts and operations; and it was highly proper that it should be so, at this first introduction of the gospel to the *Gentiles*, that God might openly testify his acceptance of them, to the greater satisfaction of *Peter*, in his having come in to them, and to the silencing of all the objections and cavils of the *Jew* against him for

it; accordingly, he, in ver. 47. and afterwards, (chap. xi. 15, 18.) appeals hereunto for these purposes, with irresistible force of argument. But, that the Holy Ghost likewise came upon them with gracious, renewing, and sanctifying influences, may be intimated by its being added, ver. 46. that *they magnified God*; and by *Peter's* saying, that the angel assured *Cornelius*, that *the apostle should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved*; and that they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ upon which the *Jews*, who had objected against his going to them, said, *Thou hast God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* (Chap. xi. 14, 18.)

† As *they spake with tongues*, it is probable that they were designed for ministers of the gospel, and had this conferred upon them, to enable them to preach to people of different languages wheresoever they might go.

for his unexpected and undeserved mercy to them, and speaking forth the great things of God's infinite love and grace, in their redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, with high expressions of faith, adoration, and joy: Then the apostle *Peter*, being much affected with this glorious dispensation, and observing how his *Jewish* friends were astonished at it, appealed to them, saying,

47 Can any man
be baptized with water, that
he should not be
baptized, which
he has received the
Holy Ghost, as well
as we?

47 Is it not plain, beyond all contradiction, that God has now taken these *Gentiles* into the gospel-covenant *; and that they may, and ought to be baptized with water, who have already been baptized with the Holy Ghost, in his being poured out upon them, as certainly, evidently, and in like manner, as he has been upon ourselves? Is there any room to question, whether they, who are partakers of the thing signified, have a right to the instituted sign and seal of it? Or can any be justly offended at its being applied to them?

48 And he com-
mended them to
be baptized in the
name of the Lord.
Then prayed they
him to tarry cer-
tain days.

48 And as this was so clear a point, and his friends, as well as he himself, were so fully convinced of it, that they had nothing to object against it, he ordered †, and took care, that these favourites of heaven should be baptized, by the authority, and into the faith, profession, worship and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of lost sinners; and ‡ so should be solemnly devoted to him, together with the Father, who had poured out his

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his

NOTES.

* The pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon them, was an evidence of their being taken into God's covenant; and the apostle's arguing from thence, that they ought to be baptized, intimates, on the one hand, that they who are taken into the gospel-covenant, and are under the promise of the Spirit, have a right to the sign and seal thereof in baptism; and, on the other, that persons having the inward baptism of the Spirit, is so far from being an argument against the need of being baptized with water, that it is an argument for it, in case they had not been baptized before; and so both infant and adult baptism, in different circumstances, are entirely consistent under the gospel-state.

† It being said, that *Peter* commanded them to be baptized, seems to intimate, that it was done by some of the believing brethren of the circumcision who attended him, they, probably, being ministers, and not immediately by his own hands: Though, perhaps, his commanding them to be baptized may

only mean, that he commanded water to be provided for baptizing them.

‡ *Grotius* observes, that, in the name of Christ is tacitly understood the Father, who anointed him, and the Spirit, with whom he was anointed to his office as the Messiah; and this may be the reason of its being generally recorded in this manner in the *Acts* of the apostles. And as these *Gentile* proselytes of the gate had before believed in God the Father, and could not but now believe in the Holy Ghost, under whose powerful influence they felt themselves to be at this very time; there was the less need of taking notice that they were baptized into the belief and profession of the Sacred Three; though it is not to be thought, but that the apostle kept to the form of administering the ordinance which Christ himself had expressly prescribed, as to be done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (*Matth.* xxviii. 19.) See the note on *chap.* ii. 38.

his Spirit upon them, and the Holy Ghost, who had wonderfully wrought in them: Which being done, the new converts earnestly intreated *Peter* to continue with them for some time, that they might be still further instructed, strengthened, edified, and comforted by his ministrations.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How good is it for us to draw near to God, who is the only object of religious worship, and is to be addressed as such in our families, as well as secret retirements! They that truly fear him will be conscientious in the performance of all acts of piety and morality, according to what faith and light they have; and will be importunate in their prayers for further guidance in his way. And though these regards to God and duty, are not the righteousness by which any of us are justified in his sight, or for the sake of which we can claim eternal life; yet, as far as they are found in us, they are agreeable to his perfections and will; and, though attended with great obscurity, they lie as a memorial before his throne of grace for good: Yea, they are accepted of him to such a degree, that, rather than the souls that thus fear him shall perish, for lack of the knowledge of Christ, he will dispatch a messenger from heaven, to put them into the way of being acquainted with him by the word of the gospel: But God has appointed his gospel to be preached, not by angels, but by men, who are commanded to testify, among other things, that Jesus Christ was anointed to, and owned of God in the Messiah's office, as an evidence of which, he went about doing good, and working miracles of power and mercy of every kind; that he, at length, was put to death, and hung upon a tree, under the curse of the law; that, as he died to make atonement for sin, he rose again for the justification of all that believe in him, and that he, in his human nature, is appointed by God the Father, to be the Judge of the whole world at the last day. How awful and endearing is his character, as the only Saviour and Lord of all, to whom give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whoever believes in him, shall receive remission of sins! Happy souls, that are brought, by Divine Providence, under the preaching of peace by Jesus Christ, with a design of special grace toward them, and who appear before God, to hear what he has to say to them, with reverence and attention, with all readiness of mind to receive it, and with an expectation of saving benefit by it! The Holy Ghost loves to own, honour, and set in with such ministrations, and such attendances upon them; and whilst others wonder, they, who are favoured with his powerful influence, will magnify God with thanksgiving, joy, and praise, as being admitted to all the blessings and privileges of the gospel-state; and they cannot but desire to be more and more acquainted with them, established in them, and edified by them. And O, with what surprising condescension, and operations of providence and grace, has God now manifested his favour to *Gentile* sinners, in publishing his gospel, and making it effectual to them, which at first was sent only to the Jews! They are now no longer to be deemed unclean; for God has no respect of persons on account of external characters and circumstances of any kind; but believers of all nations are now upon a level; and baptism, instead of circumcision, is alike the initiating seal of God's covenant to all that are taken into it. How earnest should we be in inquiring after the only way of salvation by a Redeemer! How concerned that our families and friends may be brought into it with ourselves! And what pleasure is it to have devout and faithful servants, that may be trusted, and who heartily join with us in serving the Lord! How readily should the ministers of Christ go, wherever he calls them, in hopes of success, whatsoever difficulties or discouragements may lie in their way! And how worthy are they to be entertained with hospitality and friendship, as *Peter* was by the centurion, and by *Simeon* the tanner!

C H A P. XI.

Peter is accused by his brethren at Jerusalem for going in to the Gentiles, 1,—5. He makes his defence to their abundant satisfaction, 6,—18. The gospel spreads abroad with great success in Antioch, and other places round about, 19,—21. Barnabas is sent, and, finding Paul, goes with him, to help forward the good work there, 22,—26. Agabus prophecies of a great famine; and relief is sent by the Gentile converts to the brethren in Judea, 27,—30.

TEXT.

AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,
3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,
5 I was in the city of Joppa, praying; and in a trance I saw a vision. A certain vessel descended, as it had been a great sheet, let

PARAPHRASE.

NOW (2) the conversion of *Cornelius* and his friends being an entirely new, unexpected, and extraordinary case, the report of it soon spread abroad; so that the apostles and Christian brethren at *Jerusalem* heard, to their great astonishment, that the gospel of Christ, which is indeed the word of God, had been preached to, and embraced by, even the *Gentiles* proselytes of the gate, though they had never been circumcised.

2, 3 And when the apostle *Peter* went up to *Jerusalem*, shortly after, to carry the joyful tidings himself; the *Jewish* believers, that were still fond of legal rites and ceremonies, as religious badges of distinction between them and other nations, were so far from owning him to be the supreme, infallible head of the church, or of submitting to his authority as such, by an implicit faith, that they were offended at him, called him to an account, and quarrelled with him for the part he had borne in that affair; saying, with warm resentment and indignation, You have taken too much upon you, have prostituted our peculiar privileges, defiled yourself, stretched and abused your apostolic commission, and brought a scandal upon Christianity, by going, as we have heard, to preach the gospel to uncircumcised *Gentiles*, and conversing freely with them.

4, 5 But *Peter* being fully assured in himself, and desirous to satisfy them, that he had done nothing therein, without an express order from God; frankly related to them the plain matter of fact, in all its circumstances, from first to last; and set its several parts in a just light, as he went along, that they themselves might judge of it, saying, I was not long since at the maritime town called *Joppa*, where I took up my quarters with a *Jewish* brother, *Simon*, the tanner; and being one day at prayer, on the top of his house about noon, I found myself to be very hungry, and

let down from heaven by four corners: and it came even to me.

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

and would willingly have eaten something; but, while the dinner was preparing, (*chap. x. 9, 10.*) a visionary representation of a surprising scene was made to me, in the following manner: There appeared in my view, a certain large bag, like a great sheet, with its four corners tied together, which was let down by them from heaven, and gradually descended till it came so low, as to be very near me, and to point, as it were, at me, that I might look upon myself to be immediately concerned in what might be designed by it.

6, 7 When, looking earnestly at it, I critically observed its contents, and plainly saw, through the openings, all manner of living creatures, such as tame cattle and wild beasts, that walk with their four feet on the earth, and things that creep, without any visible appearance of legs, and fowls that fly in the air: And whilst I was ruminating upon this strange sight, and considering what might be its meaning, I distinctly heard a voice, apparently divine, directed to me, saying, *Peter*, Get up from your knees immediately, kill and eat, any of these animals, that may be most agreeable to your taste, without scruple, on account of the religious distinctions that have been made between some and others of them.

8 But I, supposing that this was designed only for the trial of my faith, replied, No, Lord, I dare not go into such a downright violation of the law of *Moses*: For I have always hitherto cautiously abstained from so much as tasting any thing which has been disallowed by that law, and deemed unclean.

9 But, to set me to rights in that matter, the voice came to me again from heaven, by which I was assured that it was of God, saying, in a way of reply to my objection, The great God, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof, has an indisputable right of granting, or denying the use of his creatures, as he pleases; and what he has seen fit to purify from ceremonial defilement, it is not for you to refuse, under pretence that it is unlawful or unclean: He thereby intimating to me, that all *Mosaical* distinctions of meats were, under the gospel-state, to be laid aside; and that the difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, on religious accounts, was no longer to subsist; but that persons of all nations were to be gathered into the Christian church.

10 And the vision and voice were repeated three times over, to shew that the thing intended was certain, and to engage my attention, and prevent mistakes; and then the whole scene was regularly withdrawn, being taken up again into heaven, from whence it came.

11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come into the house where I was, sent from *Cæsarea* unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house :

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to *Joppa*, and call for *Simon*, whose surname is *Peter* :

14 Who shall hear these words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

11 And still further to instruct and confirm me in the design of all this ; whilst I was thinking of it with wonder, and was hesitating in my own mind about it, observe a remarkable occurrence, answerable to a premonition which the Spirit of God had just before given me of it : (*chap. x. 19.*) There were, at that very instant, three messengers actually arrived, who had inquired me out, and were below at *Simon's* house, and had been sent from *Cæsarea*, to desire me to go with them thither.

12 And in the previous notice which the Holy Spirit gave me of them, by an immediate powerful suggestion, he commanded me to comply with their request, without fear or scruple, though they were *Gentiles* : Accordingly, upon this warrant, I went along with them ; and for proceeding with the utmost caution, and preventing offence, I took with me from *Joppa*, the six *Jewish* brethren here present, to be witnesses of all that might pass ; and, as they can certify, we all went together into *Cornelius's* house, where I found him, and several of his relations and particular friends, waiting for me. (*Chap. x. 24.*)

13 And upon my asking the reasons of his sending for me, he told me, that having set apart some time for solemn fasting and prayer, in his own house and family, four days before I saw him, (*chap. x. 29, 30.*) he was favoured with a vision of an holy angel, in the form of a man, who stood before him in shining garments, like an inhabitant of the heavenly regions, where all is light ; and, assuring him that his prayer, for further discoveries of God's mind and will, were answered, (*chap. x. 31.*) charged him to send faithful messengers to *Joppa*, and there to inquire for one *Simon*, who was particularly known and distinguished by his surname *Peter*.

14 He, said the angel, having a commission to preach the gospel, will instruct you into the knowledge of the true Messiah, and of the only way of salvation, through him, that you and your household may come under the promises, and be partakers of the privileges which belong to the spiritual seed of *Abraham*, according to the tenor of the covenant, as made with him ; and that a spiritual and eternal salvation, which has heretofore been confined to the *Jews*, may now come to your *Gentile* family, through faith in that Saviour whom *Peter* will preach unto you.

15 Upon hearing this, and comparing *Cornelius's* vision with my own, I clearly understood, and was fully confirmed in the meaning of both, as carrying a divine command, that I should communicate the gospel to those *Gentiles* who were proselytes of the gate, and

and as such feared the Lord: And as soon as I began to preach Christ to them, in his awful and endearing characters, and to recommend him as the proper object of their faith, in order to their receiving the remission of sins, (*chap. x. 36,—43.*) God signally owned the word of his grace, by shedding down the Holy Ghost, who came upon them, not only with gracious influence to enlighten their minds and change their hearts; but likewise, in an immediate and miraculous manner, bestowing upon them the gift of tongues, even as he did on us, the apostles, and other *Jewish* believers, at the first wonderful effusion of the Spirit, on the famous day of Pentecost. (*Act. ii.*)

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

16 Then, to my still further satisfaction and joy, I could not help reflecting upon that well-known promise of our blessed Lord, just before he took his affecting leave of us, and ascended up to glory, (*Act. i. 5.*) saying, *John*, my forerunner, indeed administered to you the baptism of water; but, as the fruit of my exaltation at the Father's right hand, ye shall be partakers of a much nobler, and more efficacious baptism, of which his was a lively emblem, by my shedding down the Holy Ghost, in all his gifts and graces, abundantly upon you: And I cannot but observe, with pleasure, how this glorious promise was as truly and evidently fulfilled in these *Gentile* converts, as it had been before upon ourselves, and other native *Jews*.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?

17 In as much therefore as God, in the richest freeness, and sovereignty of his grace, undeniably conferred on those believers the like precious gift of the Holy Ghost, as he had done, at the beginning of this new dispensation, upon us, the natural seed of *Abraham*, who received and trusted in Christ by faith, as our Lord and Saviour, and the anointed of God to all his offices of prophet, priest, and king; Who was I, or what do ye take me to be, that I should be desirous, or, had I been so wicked, that I should be able (*καλοναι*) to hinder or defeat the will and counsel, authority, power, and grace of God, which in so wonderful a manner appeared to them? Or that they having the thing signified, I should refuse applying the sign of it to them in baptism? I would not. I could not, I durst not go about to deny them this privilege, and so fight against God.

18 When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted

18 This free and genuine account, which the apostle *Peter* gave of all the transactions that had passed relating to this grand affair, was so satisfactory and striking, that as soon as the rest of the apostles and all the brethren, who had before been highly offended at him for it, heard how the Lord himself manifested

manifestly directed, ordered, and succeeded it, they were thoroughly pacified, and had not one word to object against it, or against *Peter*, for interesting himself so far in it. On the contrary, all their prejudices against these uncircumcised *Gentiles*, were turned into brotherly love and affection toward them, their envy into joy, and their murmurings into praise; and they immediately broke out into lively and solemn ascriptions of glory to God, on account of this extensive, unexpected display of his power and mercy, and unexampled advancement of the Redeemer's cause and interest, saying, with high approbation and holy ecstasy, From all this it appears, with demonstrative evidence, that God, in the surprising riches of his grace, and by the mighty operation of his hand, has freely vouchsafed to the once abandoned *Gentiles* themselves, a sincere repentance for sin, and conversion to himself, which has brought them to a spiritual life, and shall issue in eternal life, that they may share with us in all the privileges and blessings of his covenant here, and may sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the kingdom of God for ever.

19 Now till this first admission of the devout, though uncircumcised *Gentiles*, to the faith and fellowship of the gospel; those ministering servants of Christ, who had been, four or five years before, driven from *Jerusalem* to all parts of *Judea* and *Samaria*, by the severities of the persecution, which immediately upon *Stephen's* death was raised and carried on, with great fury by *Saul* before his conversion, in concert with other inveterate enemies to Christianity; (*chap. viii. 1.*) these servants of Christ, I say, were indefatigably laborious in going about, and preaching the glad tidings of salvation through *Palestine*, till at length they went further, and reached as far as to *Phenicia*, a province in the coast of *Syria*, and to *Cyprus*, one of the largest islands in the *Mediterranean*, and to *Antioch*, the metropolis of *Syria*: (see the note on *chap. xiii. 14.*) But in all these dispersions, till now, they confined their ministrations of the word of faith to the *Jews* only, whom they met with in those *Gentile* countries; they not, as yet, understanding that the gospel was to be preached to any other sort of people.

20 And some of these preachers were inhabitants of *Cyprus*, and others of *Cyrene*, a noted city in *Africa*, who hearing of the conversion of *Cornelius* and of his family and friends, all proselytes of the gate, and how it had been represented to, and approved of by, the apostles and brethren at *Jerusalem*, (*ver. 18.*) they, arriving at *Antioch*, took encouragement from thence to apply themselves, not only to such *Jews*

20 And some of them were men of *Cyprus*, and *Cyrene*, which, when they were come to *Antioch*, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

20 And some of these preachers were inhabitants of *Cyprus*, and others of *Cyrene*, a noted city in *Africa*, who hearing of the conversion of *Cornelius* and of his family and friends, all proselytes of the gate, and how it had been represented to, and approved of by, the apostles and brethren at *Jerusalem*, (*ver. 18.*) they, arriving at *Antioch*, took encouragement from thence to apply themselves, not only to such *Jews*

as used the *Greek* language *, but likewise to the devout *Gentiles*, who were sometimes called the *Greeks* preaching to them a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, who is Lord of all.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

21 And the arm of the Lord was revealed, (lxxxiii. 1.) his mighty power attended their ministrations not merely in the wonderful miracles that were wrought to confirm their doctrine, which multitudes saw, and all might see, without any saving advantage to themselves; but also in effectually working with it upon the souls of their hearers: And this produced such glorious and happy fruits, that abundance of them believed in the Lord Jesus Christ: And, as an evidence of the sincerity of their faith, they, like a willing people in the day of his power, were turned in heart and life from all their self-confidences, and all their iniquities to him, as their only Saviour, the Lord their righteousness and strength, and to God through him, as their chief good and highest end.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

22 The joyful news of this great harvest, not only of Hellenist *Jews*, but likewise of *Gentile* proselytes of the gate, soon reached the church, which notwithstanding the violence of the times, still subsisted at Jerusalem, under the care and direction of the apostles, who frequently resorted thither: And as Barnabas was a man of excellent talents, and a native of Cyprus, (chap. iv. 36.) the church at Jerusalem, in concurrence with the apostles, deputed † and solemnly set him apart, as a proper person to be sent into those quarters, that he might go through them (διὰ τούτων) even as far as Antioch, to salute the new converts there in the name of the Lord, and to further

N O T E S.

* Some copies read (Ελληνισται) the *Grecians*; but the *Alexandrian* manuscript, and the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic* versions read (Ελληνες) the *Greeks*. Vid. Mil. in Loc. I have therefore taken both into the Paraphrase, but am inclined to think that the *Greeks*, or devout *Gentiles*, are principally, if not only intended; because this best suits the sense, connection, and order of the history: For the conversion of the *Grecians* or *Hellenists*, who were as properly *Jews* as any others (see the note on John xii. 20.) was taken notice of before in the course of this history; (chap. vi. 1.) and they seem to be intended by the *Jews* mentioned ver. 19. of this chap. who are called the *twelve tribes* scattered abroad, Jam. i. 1. But here the *Greeks* are opposed to the *Jews*; and an orderly account is given of the

time when the gospel was first preached and embraced among the devout *Gentiles*, or proselytes of the gate, consequent to its being received by the Hellenist *Jews*; and so its gradual advance through *Judea* and *Samaria*, to the uttermost parts of the earth, is set in a clear and regular view. Vid. Miscel. Sac. Essay IV. p. 15, &c. But afterwards great debates arose about those believers being circumcised. See Lightfoot's *Harmony of the New Testament*, Vol. I. p. 166.

† This sending forth of Barnabas to the church at Jerusalem, seems to be like what was afterwards done by the church at Antioch; when Barnabas and Saul were separated for the work, whereunto the Holy Ghost called them, with fasting, and prayer, and imposition of hands, and were sent away. Chap. xiii.

s. 2, 3.

assist and establish them in the faith, hope, and holiness of the gospel.

23 Though this was a long journey, *Antioch* being about three hundred miles distant from *Jerusalem*, he willingly undertook it, for the service of Christ and immortal souls; and when, upon his arrival at that great city, he saw the evident tokens and fruits of the grace of God, which had made a wonderful change upon the hearts, and the lives and conversation of multitudes there, he, like a true son of consolation and of exhortation, (*travandhorus chap. iv. 36.*) laid himself out, to the utmost, in stirring up their pure minds, and encouraging them, by many comfortable and persuasive considerations, taken from the riches and freeness of that grace which had manifested itself to them, in the inestimable blessings it had conferred upon them, in the securities and hopes it afforded them, and in the endearing as well as solemn obligations it laid upon them, to adhere to Christ, and to abide by their holy profession of his name, in a way of dependence upon him, and devotedness to him, with steadfastness and perseverance, and with all the united powers of their souls.

24 For this *Barnabas* was a man of a most excellent spirit and temper, disinterested, obliging, courteous, generous, and benevolent, and abundantly furnished with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and with an extensive knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, and a strong and lively faith in him, as revealed therein: And the Lord Jesus attended his ministrations to the people of this place, with such efficacious power on their hearts and consciences, that still many more were wrought upon to believe in him, and to enter into a solemn profession of his name*, by their being baptized and brought into a church-state, for walking in all the ordinances of the Lord, and in the fellowship of the gospel.

25 Then so large a field of service opening in this populous city, *Barnabas*, intent upon his Lord's work, and desirous of having a faithful fellow-labourer in this harvest; and having heard that *Saul* was about an hundred miles off, preaching at, and round about *Tarsus*, a chief city of *Cilicia*, and his native place, (*chap. xxi. 39.*) he went thither to find him out; who having been born on *Gentile* ground, was the more likely to be acceptable among the pro-

lytes

* Added to the Lord, may be of much use, as the same import with added to the church, *chap. ii. 47.* and so may intimate, that these believing profelytes of the gate

went, together with the Hellenist Jews, formed into a church-state, upon their first conversion at *Antioch*, as the believing Jews had been before at *Jerusalem*.

lytes of the gate; and whom he highly esteemed, and about three or four years before, had introduced and recommended to the apostles at Jerusalem, as an eminent instance of sovereign grace, and as a very able and zealous advocate for the cause of Christ. (Chap. ix. 27, 28, 29.)

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

26 And when he met with him, he acquainted him with the wide and effectual door that was open at Antioch; and was so far from seeking his own honour, or having any uneasiness at the thought of being out-shone by a brighter light, that he entreated Saul's assistance, who cheerfully accompanied him thither. And God having still much more work for them to do at that place, his providence ordered the staying there a full year; during which time they improved all opportunities for frequently assembling with, and ministering to this new church of devoted Gentiles, that had embraced the faith of Christ; and they preached the gospel promiscuously and freely to abundance of other people, that came to attend their ministrations: And whereas hitherto the Jewish converts had been called by their enemies, in a way of reproach, *Galileans*, *Nazarenes*, and the like; and by one another, *disciples*, *believers*, *brethren*, *saints*, and the *church*, to denote their acknowledgment of Jesus as their master, and their faith in his love, piety and holiness, in conformity to the doctrine they had learned of him; so God put a peculiar honour upon this church of converted proselytes, calling them by another, and a new name, which it was prophesied the mouth of the Lord should name; (Isa. lxi. 1. and lxi. 15.) for as the various sects of philosophers, *Platonists*, *Epicureans*, and others, took their names from their first founders; so these believers at Antioch were the first, who in a still higher sense, not without warrant from divine intimations, publicly and solemnly took upon themselves the name

N O T E

• It is well known that (*Χριστιανισμός*) the word here used, commonly, if not always, in the New Testament signifies to be divinely warned, or warned of God: And this is the sense in which our sacred historian used it, chap. x. 22; and Luke ii. 26. It is therefore highly probable, that this is the new name which the mouth of the Lord named, by immediate suggestion to Saul and Barnabas; or to some of the Antiochian believers; and that they thereupon took it solemnly upon them, as the distinguishing, and yet common character of the faithful in Christ Jesus, in opposition to all unbelieving Jews and heathens. And as to its having been taken upon them in a public and solemn manner, we are told that, in other writers, "This word (*Χριστιανισμός*) is used with regard to edicts and proclamations, such particularly as contain the people's professions of allegiance to emperors, and the privileges granted by them to the people; after which mutual declaration, the emperor in the place was publicly acknowledged, and the account of state-transactions were reckoned from that era." Dr. Lardner's paraphrase on the epistles, Vol. IV. p. 312.

of *Christians*, in opposition to unbelieving *Jews* and *heathens*, and all sorts of infidels; thereby professing, and glorying in their relation to *Christ*, as the only anointed Saviour; in their entire dependence upon him, holy unction and high expectations from him; and in their obligations, devotedness, and obedience to him, and imitation of him; and thereby shewing that all invidious distinctions between believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* should cease for ever, now they were incorporated together into one and the same body of *Christ*.

27 And as there were prophets in the Christian church, * who were eminent ministers, next in office to the apostles, (1 *Cor.* xii. 28.) and to whom the Spirit of truth, according to *Christ's* promise, (*John* xvi. 13.) revealed some future events, for the direction of the church's conduct in particular cases, and for the confirmation of the gospel, when the facts that were foretold should come to pass; so, about this time, some of these holy and inspired men, having heard what great things God was doing in these parts, came from *Jerusalem* to *Antioch*, to counsel, comfort, and establish the Christians, and help forward the work of the Lord there.

28 Among these, *Agabus* by name, who afterwards foretold *Paul's* sufferings and bonds, (*chap.* xxi. 10, 11.) rose up one day in a public assembly, and declared, by the spirit of prophecy, that as our Lord himself had predicted that famines would be among the signs which should precede his coming to destroy *Jerusalem*; (*Luke* xxi. 11.) so there would very soon be such a scarcity of corn, as would be very extensive; would grievously oppress the whole land of *Judea* in particular†, and even a great part of

NOTES.

* See a particular account of these prophets at large in Dr. *Whitby's* general preface to the epistles, sect. 12. and in *Miscellan. Sacr. Essay* i. pag. 45.

† *Josephus*, who wrote principally about the affairs of the *Jews*, says, in his antiquities, lib. xx. cap. 2. That the famine spread over their country: And *Eusebius*, in his *Chronicon*, places it in the fourth year of *Claudius*; and in his ecclesiastical history, lib. ii. cap. 8. takes notice, that it was recorded by historians, who were most abhorrent of the Christian religion, and that it oppressed the world, or the Roman empire, (*ῥωμαίωνων*) which, in the days of its pride and vast dominion, the Romans often stilled the whole world; (*ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην*) and as *Luke* himself used the phrase in this sense, *Luke* ii. 1. it may not be necessary to confine the extent of this famine to the land of *Judea*; as some learned men have done. And though mention is made, ver. 29. of the disciples lending relief, according to their ability, to *Judea*, without taking notice of their sending to any other place; this may only intimate, that the providence of God ordered, and over-ruled this famine; so soon after the conversion of the *Gentile* proselytes, to give them opportunities of softening the prejudices of the *Jews* in *Judea*, and ingratiating themselves with them, by their liberal distributions to the poor of that country, which, perhaps, was most afflicted by the famine's prevailing more there than in other parts,

of the *Roman* empire, to such a degree, that the poor would be in great want of bread; which accordingly fell out about two years afterwards, in the fourth year of the emperor *Claudius Caesar*.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in *Judea*.

29 Then the Christians at *Antioch*, who were a trading people, and whom God had prospered in their secular affairs, believing that he had revealed this important secret to his servant the prophet; and taking it as a seasonable hint of what he was about to do, and of what he called them to, by his providence, came into a common resolution and agreement, that every one of them, in proportion to his ability and abundance, (*sachis notragirs vii*) would cheerfully testify their affection to their *Jewish* brethren in the faith, that resided in *Judea*; where the poor, many of which received the gospel, were very numerous, through a general want of traffic in those parts; where the difficulty of the times to the poor saints was exceeding great; and where the famine was like to be most raging: For as these *Gentile* converts had been made partakers of their spiritual things, by receiving the gospel from thence; so they thought it their duty to minister to them in carnal or temporal things, (*Rom. xv. 27.*) by relieving their necessities.

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul*.

30 And as they had a willing mind, so there was a readiness to perform the good purposes of their hearts, which they did by making liberal collections; and that their bounty might be distributed with faithfulness and impartiality, as need might require, they sent it, against the days of scarcity, to the officers and particularly the deacons of the church at *Jerusalem*, by the hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul*; who readily undertook this service, and were glad of such a favourable opportunity of reporting there the great things that the Lord had done among the proselytes of the gate at *Antioch*, of setting them in the most advantageous light, and of cultivating a good understanding between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* believers, and further helping the faith and joy of the disciples in *Judea*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a pleasure is it to hear of sinners receiving the gospel; and how much more so, to see the evident fruits of the grace of God, as effectually working in them! The honour and interest of the dear Redeemer, and the good of immortal souls, are so eminently advanced hereby, that we ought to glorify God on this account.

NOTE.

* It is probable, that these elders, the famous day of *Pentecost*, chap. ii. and those mentioned chap. xv. were and that out of them the prophets and some of Christ's first disciples, upon teachers were taken, and the first deacons were chosen, chap. vi. See *Miscellaneous* on this subject. *Sacr. Vel. II. p. 110, — 119.*

ment: And yet, alas! how apt are prejudices, envy, and jealousy to rise, in the hearts of some weak Christians, at the thought of their enemies, and persons of detested characters, like the *Gentiles*, being made partakers of equal privileges and blessings with themselves! But the servants of Christ must follow his directions, and execute his commission, in preaching the gospel to every creature, how much sooner some may be offended at it; and yet they should be ready to clear their conduct therein to scrupulous minds, and to such as would rejoice in proper evidence, that it is of God, and that he owns it. Who are we, that any of us should go about to withstand God, who distributes his free favours to whom he pleases, and overrules even the violence of persecutors to the spreading of the gospel; and who, by the power of his Spirit attending it, brings great numbers to believe and turn to the Lord! And when he has granted to any repentance unto life, what an honour should they count it to be vested in the privileges, and act up to the profession and obligations, that are included in their being called after Christ's name! How easily should they avow their character, as *Christians*; and how cheerfully hold communion one with another, though distinguished by other denominations, like the circumcised and the uncircumcised! How concerned should they all be to converse with full purpose of heart to the Lord. And with what readiness of mind should the rich communicate to the poor in times of want, and especially in times of great scarcity and famine, which never come upon the earth without the foreknowledge of God; and which his providence sometimes involves his own people in, for the trial, exercise, and improvement of their own, or of others faith and piety, as well as of various other graces, and of their self-denying obedience?

C H A P. XII.

Herod persecutes the Christians, kills the apostle James, and imprisons Peter, 1.—4. Peter is brought out of prison by an angel, in answer to the prayers of the church for him, 5.—19. Herod, in the midst of his pride, is struck by an angel, and dies miserably, 20.—23. After his death the word of God prevails exceedingly, and Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch, 24. 25.

TEXT.

NOW about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church.

PARAPHRASE.

ABOUT the time that the gospel had such a wonderful spread among the proselytes of the gate, as well as the Jewish strangers at Antioch, and that Agabus foretold an approaching famine, (chap. xi. 26, 28.) Herod* Agrippa, a man of the same spirit with Herod the Great who murdered the infants of Bethlehem, in his thirst for the blood of Jesus, (Matth. ii. 16.) and with Herod Antipas, who cut off the head of John the Baptist, and treated our Lord himself with derision, (Luke ix. 9. and xxiii. 11.) This Herod Agrippa, who was king of Judea and

NOTE.

Herod was the surname of this Agrippa, and he was the grandson of Herod the great, and the nephew of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, (Luke xiii. 32.) and was himself not only made king of Galilee by Caligula in Antioch, but was confirmed therein by the addition of the kingdom of Ju-

dea by Claudius Caesar, to whom he had been serviceable in obtaining his advancement to the imperial crown: And he was the father of that king Agrippa, before whom Paul was brought, and whom he almost persuaded to be a Christian, chap. xxvi. 1.—25.

and *Galilee*, began to raise a fresh persecution against the church at *Jerusalem*, greatly distressing many of its members.

3 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

4 And after he had harassed, and inflicted various punishments on some of less note and figure among them, he proceeded to still bolder and more cruel acts of violence, even to the taking away the life of the apostle *James*, who was the son of *Zebedee*, and brother to the apostle *John*; and for his zeal and fervour was signified by our Lord, a son of thunder. (*Mark* iii. 17.) And so, according to Christ's prediction (*Matth.* xx. 23.) he was baptized with the baptism of sufferings, and that even to the shedding of his blood; and was the first of all the apostles, that suffered martyrdom for his sake, which *, for the manner of it, was by cutting off his head with a sword.

5 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread)

3 And as one act of wickedness leads the way to another, and *Herod* found that this execution was very acceptable to, and highly ingratiated him with the chief people among the *Jews*, such as the priests, elders, and rulers, who continued to be inveterate enemies to the gospel of Christ, he proceeded to apprehend the apostle *Peter* also, just as the paschal feast was coming on, with an intention of making a sacrifice of him, who was most remarkably active, bold, and instrumental, in the conversion of *Jerusalem*.

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

4 When therefore he had seized him by his officers, he ordered him to be clapped up in prison, and committed him to the care of sixteen soldiers, strictly charging them to keep watch and ward on him, four at a time in their turns, that he might have no means escape, as he had before, (*chap.* v. 19.) *Herod* designing to bring him out, and expose him to the rage of the people, after the passover; but not during the time of that festival, lest they, who were better affected toward the Christians than the rulers were, (*chap.* ii. 47.) should claim their privilege of begging that he might be released to them according to their custom at that feast. (*Mark* xlvii. 15.)

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

5 For this reason, he kept *Peter* in close custody till a favourable opportunity might offer for cutting him off: But the church at *Jerusalem*, being apprehensive of his danger, and of the great importance of his life to the interest of religion; and being of affection and concern for him, united their earnest importunations.

N O T E.

* As far as I find, it is generally agreed, that, according to *Eusebius's* account, (*Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. 5.) *James* was beheaded with the sword; and some have thought, that this was done by the sword, as a more graceful way of execution than by the axe.

importunate, and frequent prayers to God, day and night, on his behalf, in faith and hope that he would graciously and powerfully appear, in his own way and time, for his deliverance.

6 And as he gave them opportunity and space for fervent, solemn, and repeated addresses to a throne of grace, that he might glorify his own name, as a God hearing prayer; so he seasonably, and in a surprising manner, answered their supplications: For the very night before the day, which *Herod* had appointed to bring the apostle out of jail, in order to his being publicly put to death; *Peter*, not being terrified by his adversaries, nor yet expecting immediate deliverance, laid himself down and slept with a composed and quiet heart, as knowing that he suffered for a good cause; two of the soldiers at the same time being chained, one to his right hand, and another to his left, to prevent his privately slipping away from them; and two others standing as centinels at the door of the prison, that none might force its locks and bars, and open it for his escape; in this manner four at a time kept watch and ward. (ver. 4.)

7 And whilst every thing was thus made as sure as possible, for detaining him, behold how wonderfully God appeared at the critical juncture, and surmounted all difficulties in releasing him! All on a sudden, an angel of the Lord, dispatched from heaven, entered the prison, and was surrounded with such bright and glorious rays as enlightened the whole room; and having roused *Peter* out of his sleep, by giving him a jog on his side, he, † unawares to all the soldiers, (ver. 18.) gently raised his body; and, speaking to him at the same time, said, Stand upon your feet without delay. Upon which the chains, that fastened him to the two soldiers lying by him, were miraculously snapped asunder, as if they had been but twined thread, and fell off from his hands.

8 The angel likewise said to him, with authority and engaging kindness, Gird those cloaths about you, in which you have lain, and are now clad; and put on your sandals, tying them fast with their thongs to your feet; which he accordingly did: And the angel

NOTES.

* The Roman way of chaining prisoners was, by fastening one end of an iron chain of some length to the right hand of the prisoner, and the other end to the left hand or arm of a soldier, if not one had the custody of him; and by fastening another chain, in like manner, to the left hand of the prisoner, and the right of another soldier, if he were

committed to the care of two, as *Peter* was.

† The soldiers might be either cast into a deep sleep, or struck with blindness, or else with such confusion and astonishment at this awful and illuſtrious appearance of the angel, as made them incapable of observing what became of *Peter*.

did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street: and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

angel further added, Throw your loose upper garment about you, and then come after me; intimating that he was sent of God to deliver him out of prison and out of the cruel hands of Herod.

9 And Peter obeying the word of command, without hesitancy or disputing, readily followed his heavenly guide, wherever he might go before him; and yet, knowing himself to have been in a sound sleep, he did not immediately apprehend, that all this management of the angel was really matter of fact; but rather imagined that he had only a clear visionary presentation of these things, in a dream, as though they had been real.

10 When the angel had conducted him undiscovered, through the first and second watches, that were set for the greater safety in the night*, they came to the iron gate, that stood between them and the city; and though it was exceeding strong and heavy and well fastened with locks and bars, it, by an invisible power, was made to fly open, as readily, as all at once, as if it had opened merely of itself; hereupon they went out of the prison-yard with safety free from all obstructions that lay in their way; and having walked together the length of one street in the city, which brought the apostle out of the clutch of his keepers, and into his own knowledge, and gave him a fair opportunity of shifting for himself, the angel immediately disappeared; there being no further occasion for extraordinary assistance to complete his escape.

11 Then Peter, being alone, and having recovered himself from the ecstasy and surprise which had made him ready to think of himself, as only like one who dreamed of things that were too great and good to be true; he, in a composed reflection on all the circumstances of the case, said in his own mind, I am now thoroughly assured, that this was no imaginary scene, by way of divine premonition of what should be; but that the Lord Jesus has actually sent one of his holy angels, who are all ministering servants unto the heirs of salvation; (*Heb. i. 14.*) and that, by the kind ministration of this messenger from heaven, he has miraculously delivered me out of Herod's power.

N O T E.

* It is mostly thought, that the prison was in the suburbs, because the iron gate is said to have led into the city; but then one would be apt to expect, that, being already out of the prison, *ἐξελθὼν*, they went out to the city, should rather have been, *they went into*: It therefore seems, that the iron gate, which led into the city, was only a strong outward gate between the prison and the city, whether the prisoners were within, or without the walls; and, perhaps, the first and second watches were rather such as were placed in the prison-yard for greater security, the public watches belonging to the city.

who thought he had got me safe ; and has disappointed the hopes of those unbelieving and malicious Jews, who were looking and longing for my death.

12 And when he had deliberated with himself what might be his prudence and duty to do, for improving this extraordinary deliverance, he went, under a happy direction of Providence, to the dwelling-house of Mary, one of his friends, (who was the sister of Barnabas, (Col. iv. 10.) and the mother of John Mark) where a considerable number of the church were assembled together, as they used to do in the night, for fear of the Jews ; (John xx. 19.) and, encouraged by Christ's promise, (Matt. xviii. 19, 20.) were spending time in solemn prayer, as they had often done before, (ver. 5.) for their beloved apostle in bonds, that God would appear for him at this critical juncture, since Herod had resolved to proceed against him the next morning. (ver. 6.)

13 And as soon as Peter knocked at the door of the porch (*τῆς θυρίας τοῦ προαύλου*) of the house, a young woman, whose name was Rhoda, went to listen and inquire who he was, or whom he would speak with, and what his business might be at that unreasonable time of night, that she might be satisfied whether it were a friend, or an enemy, before she would venture to let him in.

14 Upon Peter's telling her his name, and desiring to be let in, she, well knowing his voice, was so excessively transported with joy, and surprised-at the unexpected and unlikely event, that she had not patience, and presence of mind enough, to open the door, but ran back with all speed to the company, and told them, that Peter himself stood at the door, seeking entrance ; God having answered their prayers, while they were yet speaking, according to his promise. (Isa. lxx. 24.)

15 Then they being as much surprised as she, and knowing that he was in fast hold, cried out, That is impossible ; some excess of your passions therefore must certainly have turned your brain, and made you talk thus wildly ; But she persisting, like one in her senses, that she was positively sure it was he ; they concluded * that it was either some messenger from him,

U 2

who

N O T E.

* As the word *αγγελος* signifies a messenger, as well as an angel, I have taken in both senses ; but am inclined to think that the last was intended, because angels often appeared in those days, and an angel was more likely than a messenger from Peter, to imitate his voice ; and these disciples seem to have recei-

ved the common notion of the Jews in those days, that every good man had his tutelar, or guardian angel, who, on special occasions, could assume the shape and voice of the man himself ; though it do not appear that there is any foundation, in the word of God, for this conceit, of each one's having his particular guardian

who spoke like him, or mentioning his name was understood, as though he had called himself *Peter* or that it was an angel from heaven, who imitated the tone of his voice, and came to bring them some tidings concerning him.

16 But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

16 But while they were debating the matter, Peter, finding that the family was up, continued knocking; and the company, being desirous to see how far the young woman might be in the right, considered the door to be opened: And when, upon seeing the apostle, they were satisfied it was really he himself, they were exceedingly amazed to think how he got thither, and could not forbear asking him about it.

17 But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

17 But as no time was to be lost in particular inquiries and answers, lest his enemies should pursue and find him out, he made a sign with his hand to intimate his desire that they would be silent, and give him audience; and then briefly told them in what wonderful manner the Lord Jesus, by an angel, had set him at liberty: And as none of the other apostles were present at this assembly; but James the less the son of Alphaeus, (Mat. x. 3. see the note there) was then * not far off, he ordered them to go and acquaint him, and the rest of the brethren, how miraculously he was brought out of prison, in answer to their prayers, that they might bless God for it, and be comforted and encouraged by it. Thereupon he took his leave of the company, and went to another place, that they might not be exposed to danger for his sake, and that he might wait for a proper opportunity of getting out of the way of his enemies, and going on with his Lord's work, wherever he should call him.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers what was become of Peter.

18 Now, as soon as the following day came on the guards awaking, missed their prisoner, and were in the utmost consternation and fright, in thinking what was become of Peter; one charging another with neglect, and all of them being utterly at a loss to account for his escape, and dreadfully apprehensive that the government would be extremely severe upon them, as having connived at it, or been wanting in their duty to prevent it, if not accessory to it.

19 And when Herod

19 And they had reason to be afraid of this: For

NOTES.

guardian angel, in distinction from others. *Vid. Calv. in Loc.*

* It is uncertain whether James were at that time in Jerusalem, or in some neighbouring parts of the country; but wherever he was, neither he nor any of

other of the apostles could appear openly with safety, because of the violence of Herod's persecution, which now seemed to be most directly levelled against the apostles as were within his reach; and therefore all the rest of them were gone from that city.

Herod had sought for him; and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode.

when Herod sent for him to be brought out of jail, in order to the intended public execution, and perceived that he was gone; and when he had made inquiry after him in the city, but could not find him, he, summoning the soldiers to appear before him, strictly examined those four of them particularly, whose turn it was to be on their watch, how they came to lose their prisoner; and they being unable to give any account of it, he forthwith ordered that their lives should go for his. After this, he set out from Judea to Caesarea, where he continued for some time, to pursue his diversions in celebrating the games, which Herod the Great had instituted to be observed every fifth year, to the honour of Caesar's memory.

And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blaisus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace: because their country was nourished by the king's country.

20 And as this Herod Agrippa was highly offended with, and (*θυμωμένος*) threatened to make war upon the people of Tyre and Sidon, for some misdemeanor, which he charged them with; so they took the opportunity, whilst he was in their neighbourhood, of sending ambassadors to him, by a united deputation from both those cities, to make their submission, and appease his resentment: And having obtained the friendship of Blaisus the king's chamberlain, who had his ear, they made use of his interest to procure their reconciliation with him, which was highly necessary for them, because, being a numerous and trading people, and having little land of their own, they could not well subsist without a supply of corn, honey, and oil, and such like provisions from Judea, and other parts of the king's dominions, (1 Kings v. 11. and Ezek. xxvii. 17.) which they feared he would prohibit, unless the breach were made up between him and them.

And upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

21 And upon an appointed day, when there was a great concourse of all ranks and orders of men, Herod appeared in wonderful pomp and state, clothed with magnificent glittering robes of silver brocade, which, by the shining of the sun upon them, perfectly dazzled the eyes of the spectators, and gave him a most awful and august appearance: Thus arrayed, he placed himself on his royal seat, and made a fine speech to the people, in praise of Caesar's memory †, and

NOTES.

* Josephus says that he went down to Caesarea for this purpose; and that it was at the end of the third year of his reign over all Judea. Vid. Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 8.

† It is very probable, that this oration was suited both to the occasion of the assembly, in honour of Caesar's memory, and to the affairs that lay between Herod and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, who are the proper antecedent to them, to whom this oration was made; and that it was calculated to extol his own, as well as Caesar's praises, on account of his power over them, and condescension to them. Josephus tells us, that

and of his own high pretensions, and great goodness in passing by the offence of the inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, upon their submission to him.

22 And the people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

22 Thereupon the people, partly pleased with his discourse, and partly desirous to gratify his pride and ambition, surrounded him with shouts and applauses, as though he were a god *, saying, An oration delivered with such majesty and sweetness, eloquence and force, is rather the voice of an incarnate deity, or at least of one that deserves to be deified, than of a mere mortal man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

23 But (24) God soon humbled him, in a most exemplary manner, for the iniquity of his pride, and of his cruelty to the servants of Christ, as he had some other haughty tyrants and persecutors before him: For as *Nebuchadnezzar*, amidst his imperious boasts, was driven from his throne, and levelled with the brutes; (*Dan. iv. 31, &c.*) and *Belsazzar*, whilst he was lifting up himself against the Lord of heaven, had an astonishing notice of the loss of his kingdom; (*Dan. v. 22,—28.*) so the angel of the Lord, as a minister of justice, immediately struck *Herod* with a loathsome and mortal disease †, because his vanity was so tickled with the impious flatteries of the people, that, instead of checking and rebuking them, he was fond of taking those divine honours to himself, which were due, and ought to have been ascribed to God only. And so malignant was his distemper, that, in the compass of five days, he was in a manner devoured by worms, which bred in his putrified flesh, and preyed upon it, till he finished his wretched life by a most deplorable death.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

24 In the mean while, notwithstanding the late fierce opposition and cruelties of *Herod* against the Christians, but especially after he was cut off, in so astonishing a manner, by the righteous hand of God, the gospel was freely preached in many places, and attended

N O T E S.

that this was on the second day of that festival; and that *Herod* went early in the morning into the theatre, clothed with a robe of curious workmanship, all of silver, which reflected the rays of the rising sun with such lustre; as struck the eyes of them that looked upon him, with a sort of dread and horror. *Antig. lib. xix. cap. 8.*

* Such blasphemous flattery was the more criminal in this company, as many of them were *Jews*, who professed to abhor the polytheism of the heathens; and perhaps they designed it as an affront to Christ, by setting up *Herod*, in

opposition and preference to him, who had spoke of himself as God incarnate.

† We have an account at large of this disease in *Josephus*, and of *Herod's* being forced to acknowledge that he, who was then cried up for a God, must die like a mortal man. *Antig. lib. xix. cap. 8.* And *Eusebius* has recited the whole story of him, as an attestation to the truth of the scripture-history of it. *Vide Ecclesiast. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 10.* See also *Whitby* on this place, for various instances of the like miserable exits of violent persecutors, who were eaten up of worms.

attended with great success in the conversion of multitudes, and in the edification and establishment of the disciples in their most holy faith.

25 And about this time, *Barnabas* and *Saul* having discharged their trust at *Jerusalem*, in delivering, and taking care about a due distribution of the charity, sent by the *Antiochian* Christians to the believers there, (*chap. xi. 30.*) returned from thence back to *Antioch*, to carry on the begun work of the Lord in that great city, and to be sent from thence to still remoter parts among the *Gentiles*: (*chap. xiii. 1, 2, &c.*) And they took along with them *John Mark*, at whose mother's house the disciples were met to pray for *Peter*, when he came to them, (*ver. 12.*) and who was *Barnabas's* nephew, (*Col. iv. 10.*) that they might train him up for the ministry; and that he might be assistant to them in their travels and labours; (*chap. xiii. 5.*) accounts of which are given at large in the following parts of this history.

RECOLUTIONS.

Which shall we most wonder at, the wickedness of men in promoting, or the wisdom of God in over-ruling the persecution of the church? This is an iniquity made up of selfishness and pride, rashness and cruelty; it is nothing but *doing evil*; and as the way of sin is all down-hill, one step drags on another, and cannot tell where to stop short of usurping God's prerogative, and of imprisoning and murdering the best of men: But how pleasing soever all this may be to ignorant and furious spirits, and how much soever applauded by mean-spirited flatterers, it is highly offensive to the merciful and holy God, who often, in jealousy for his own glory, strikes the haughty and most violent persecutors memorable examples of his dreadful vengeance, and delivers his faithful servants out of their hands: O with what amazing management does his providence operate, in over-ruling the worst that men can do, to subserve the propagation of the gospel, and the increase of the church; and in seasonably cutting off its implacable enemies, amidst all their pomp and grandeur! The prayers of his people are their arms of defence; and will, at any time or other, prove too hard for all that oppose them; when God pours down his Spirit of grace and supplication, it is a sign that their deliverance is at hand; and the time of their extremity is his opportunity to arise for their help; in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen; he will rather send an angel from heaven, than execute his kind designs toward them: But when he affords them ordinary means for their preservation, miracles are needless, and they ought not to expect

C H A P. XIII.

Saul and Barnabas are solemnly separated to their apostolic office among Gentiles, as well as Jews, in the church at Antioch, 1.— Their first apostolic journey, beginning at Seleucia, and proceeding from thence to Salamis and Paphos, in the isle Cyprus, 4.— Their rencounter at Paphos with Elymas the sorcerer, and converting Sergius Paulus, 8.—12. Saul, who from that time is called Paul, goes with Barnabas and others to Perga in Pamphylia, and from thence to Antioch in Pisidia, where they preached Christ to the Jews, and devout Gentiles, many of which were converted, 13.—43. But other Jews contradicting and blaspheming, they waxed bold, and preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, with great success, 44.—49. And, the unbelieving Jews raising persecution against the apostles, they depart from thence to Iconium, bearing their testimony against those infidels, and leaving the disciples full of joy, 50.—52.

TEXT.

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers: as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW in the church at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, which, consisting mostly of Gentile converts, (see the notes on chap. xi. 20, 24.) was deemed the mother-church of the believing Gentiles, that at Jerusalem was of the believing Jews, and all that should be afterwards brought to the faith of Christ; there were not only ordinary preachers of eminent gifts and graces, but likewise a considerable number of prophets, who were the highest rank of officers next to the apostles, (see the note on chap. xi. 27.) and were the principal ministers in the church; as particularly the before-mentioned Barnabas, (chap. xii. 25.) and * Simeon, who for his tawny complexion, and the colour of his hair, was named, by the Latins, Niger, which signifies black. There were also † Lucius, a native of Cyrene; and Manaen, who had been educated with Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, (Luke iii. 1.) and so was such an intimate friend and favourite of that prince as might have expected great preferments from him; but, grace having reached his heart, he, like another Moses, despised them all for Christ: And, to name no more, there was the famous Saul, who lately returned hither with Barnabas from Jerusalem.

NOTES.

* Some have thought that this Simeon was Simon the Cyrenean, who was compelled to bear the cross after our Lord to Mount Calvary. (Mark xv. 21.)

† We read of one Lucius, who is mentioned by the apostle Paul as a per-

son of note, (Rom. xvi. 21.) he may probably be the Lucius here spoken of as a prophet; and Dr. Lightfoot imagines that this might be Luke, who was the writer of this history, and of that Gospel which bears his name.

2 While

As they mini-
stried to the Lord,
and fasted, the Ho-
ly Ghost said, Sepa-
rate me Barnabas
and Saul, for the
work whereunto I
have called them.

2 Whilst, on a certain day, these inspired prophets were leading, directing, and assisting the worship of the church, in exhortations to them, and in acts of religious devotion to the Lord Jesus, for the honour of his name, and in obedience to his commands; and while, for the greater solemnity and continuance of the service, and humbling of themselves before him, they abstained from the usual refreshments of nature, the Holy Ghost said to them, by immediate suggestion, and * with the majesty and authority of a divine person, Set apart *Barnabas* and *Saul* in a solemn manner, as ministering servants dedicated to me, and to the good work to which I, together with the great Head of the church, have appointed, called and anointed them, and inclined their hearts, that they might go into distant countries, and *preach among the Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Eph. iii. 8.)

And when
they had fasted
and prayed, and
laid their hands
on them, they sent
them away.

3 Accordingly, when the prophets, with the concurrence of the church, had spent some further time in fasting and prayer, for recommending them to the grace of God, (*chap. xiv. 26.*) and for a blessing on their labours; and had laid their hands upon them, as an ordinance to their faith, and as a signal of further extraordinary furniture and assistance which he would give them for fulfilling that part of their ministry, (*ἀπολύων*) they dismissed them, with high approbation of their travelling, in the quality of apostles †, to *disciple all nations*, according to the commission

NOTES.

* The Holy Spirit's using the personal pronouns *I*, and *me*, in speaking to the prophets; and its being said, that he called the apostles to their work, and *they were sent forth* by him, which are personal actions, shew him to be what we call a *person*; and his ordering, by his own authority, and in an absolute way, that *Barnabas* and *Saul* should be separated to him, as persons devoted to his honour and service, in the work to which he called them, shews that he is a *divine person*, or truly God.

† The author of *Miscellaneous Sacra* made it exceeding probable to me, that as it was necessary for an apostle to have seen the Lord after his resurrection from the dead; so *Saul's* late journey with *Barnabas* to *Jerusalem*, was the time when he saw the *person* of Christ in a trance in one of the courts of the temple, which is referred to, *chap. xxii. 14* (see the note on *chap. ix. 11.*) and that then he received his commission, im-

mediately from Christ himself, for his apostolic office, which was to be exercised principally among the idolatrous *Gentiles*; for till now he preached only as a prophet, without the apostolic character, about *seven or eight years* to the *Jews* only, and about *four or three years* more to the *Gentile-prophets* of the gate: As also that, about the same time, *Barnabas* was made an apostle of the *Gentiles*, together with him; and that this was first notified to the prophets of the church at *Antioch*, who could not but be pleased with these two persons, whom Infinite Wisdom had fixed upon, as the most proper and unexceptionable messengers to the heathen; because they themselves were born on *Gentile ground*, one at *Cyprus*, and the other at *Tarsus*; and had for a great while publicly approved themselves to be eminent and faithful ministers of the gospel. See this subject elaborately discussed in *essay II. p. 27, &c.* and *essay III.* throughout.

4 So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia: and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain forcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

commission which Christ, before his ascension, had given to his servants in general.

4 They therefore (our) being in this public and solemn manner, and with this rich encouragement sent out by the special direction, influence, and power of the Holy Spirit, began their first apostolic journey, by going directly to *Seleucia*, which lay about fifteen miles from *Antioch*, on the river *Orontes* and from thence, going a ship-board, they sailed away to the island *Cyprus*, in the *Mediterranean* sea which was *Barnabas's* native country, and abounded with *Jews*.

5 And when they arrived at *Salamis*, which was the chief town of the eastern part of that island, over against *Syria*; they first of all repaired to the synagogues there, as they usually did in other places, and preached the gospel of the grace of God to the *Jews* that they might give them the preference, and leave them without excuse: And *John*, whose surname was *Mark*, (*chap. xii. 25.*) attended them, to assist them in the work of the Lord, as private or public opportunities might offer.

6 And when they had travelled through the greatest part of the island to *Paphos*, which was its chief city on the western coast, and had been famous among the heathens for the temple of *Venus*: At this place they met with a very noted forcerer, who dealt in the wicked art of divination, set up for a prophet and fortune-teller, and was a *Jew* by birth, whose name was *Bar-Jesus*, which signifies the son of *Josbua*.

7 This infamous wretch had got access to *Sergius Paulus*, the *Roman* governor of the island*, endeavouring to ingratiate himself with him, who resided at this city, and was (*our*) an understanding, considerate man; and who having heard something of the fame of *Barnabas* and *Saul*, and of the new doctrine they taught, was desirous to see them, and hear, from their own mouths, what they had to say about the Christian religion, that he might the better compare

N O T E.

* The word here rendered the deputy, (*ἀρβυράτος*) signifies a *proconsul*, which was the name of the chief governor of a province, when he was set over it by the *Roman* senate: But this officer was called *proprator*, when he was made governor of a province by the emperor, as the lieutenant is made governor of *Ireland* by the king of *Great Britain*. The same title is likewise given to *Gallio*, the elder brother of *Seneca*, (*chap. xviii. 12.*) with an exact propriety, because, at the

time of *Luke's* writing his history of the *Acts*, both these persons were made governors of their respective provinces by the senate; though before that time the governors of them severally received their authority from the emperor, and then were called *proprators*. Testimonies to this purpose from *Dio Cassius*, *Strabo*, *Suetonius*, and *Tacitus*, may be seen in *Lardner's* *Credibility of the Gospel Hist.* Vol. I. p. 44, &c.

compare and judge between their pretensions and those of *Bar-Jesus*: And therefore he sent for them to come to him, as *Cornelius* had for *Peter*; (*chap. x.*) Providence so ordering it, that their way might be the clearer, in their first going to preach to an idolatrous Gentile, as that apostle's was, for his first preaching to the proselytes of the gate.

8 But Elymas the forcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

8 But when they went to instruct him in the chief points of the gospel, this forcerer (whose *Arabic* name, *Elymas*, signifies a magician) set himself to contradict and oppose them with all his tricks and arts, as the magicians in *Egypt* did *Moses*, (*Exod. vii. and viii.* compared with *2 Tim. iii. 8.*) endeavouring thereby to prevent the governor's receiving the faith of Christ; lest not only he, but many other idolaters likewise, by his example and influence, should be induced to believe; and so both his own and Satan's interest should be overturned among them.

9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

9 Then *Saul*, who from this time forward shall be called, and commonly went by his *Roman* name *Paul**, as the most acceptable name to the *Gentiles*; and who, being the most eminent and active apostle in his ministrations to them, bears a chief part in the following history; this *Paul*, I say, being filled with wisdom and knowledge, and with a just indignation and zeal, by an extraordinary afflatus of the Holy Ghost, fixed his eyes stedfastly upon the magician, to put him out of countenance, and observe what change might appear in it; as also to intimate, that God took particular notice of all his abominable wickedness.

10 And said, O thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

10 And, by an immediate dictate of the Spirit, he severely reprimanded him, saying, O the astonishing deceit and cunning, and pernicious malignity, that have thoroughly possessed thee, thou child of the devil, that old deceiver and false accuser, who bearest his likeness, pursuest his interest, actest under his influence, and practisest his treacherous and inveterate arts! Thou-implacable adversary of all religion and holiness, truth and goodness, which the gospel is evidently designed to promote! How durst you still, while the light of this glorious gospel shines round about you, persist in putting false constructions upon, and turning men aside from, the ways of the Lord Jesus, which he has appointed and opened for

X 2

duty

N O T E.

* As his being so constantly called *Paul*, ever after this, was most agreeable to the *Gentiles*, when he became an apostle to them; so the conversion of *Marcus Paulus* might give the immedi-

ate occasion for this alteration in the use of his name, from that of *Saul* to that of *Paul*; the first of which was his *Jewish*, and the second his *Roman* name, both of which were given him in his infancy.

duty and happiness; and which directly lead to eternal life, and are all right and true, without the least iniquity, or error in them?

11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

14 But when they departed from Perga,

11 And now behold, with dread, conviction, and submission! The mighty power of the Lord Christ whom you have despised, reproached, and opposed, will soon decide the controversy between us his servants and you the servant of the devil! His immediate and righteous judgment is now irresistibly coming down upon you; and, manure all the art and force of earth and hell, you shall be instantly deprived of your bodily sight, and continue so totally dark for a considerable time, at least, as not to be able to see the smallest glimmering of the shining sun at noon day; which will be an exemplary and emblematic punishment of your sin, in the wilful blindness of your own heart, and in your perverse endeavours to do Satan's work in blinding the minds of them that believe not: (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Accordingly, all on a sudden, a thick impenetrable mist of darkness miraculously spread over his eyes, and made him so entirely blind, that he groped about to feel his way, and begged that somebody would have so much pity upon him, as to take him by the hand, and be his guide.

12 Then the governor having been not only present at the debates that had passed between the apostle and the magician, but likewise an eye-witness of this awful and miraculous event, believed in the Lord Jesus, who had made known his divine power, in so surprising a manner, to the confusion of *Elymas*, and the confirmation of his own most excellent and holy doctrine, which proceeded from himself as its author, and related to him as its principal subject; and which came in the demonstration of the Spirit, to this great man's heart.

13 Now when the apostle *Paul*, and those that accompanied him, set sail from *Paphos*, and so departed from the isle *Cyprus*, they directed their course to *Perga*, a city of *Pamphylia*, which was a province of *Asia the less*; and the most memorable occurrence there was, that *John Mark* took his leave of them, and returned to *Jerusalem* to see his mother, and to seek for *Peter* there, now *Herod* was dead, choosing to be with them, whom he affectionately loved, rather than to go forward with these apostles in their difficult and dangerous enterprize among the *Gentiles*; in which he discovered so much of a timorous and selfish spirit, as was highly displeasing to *Paul*. (*Chap. xv. 38.*)

14 But to go on with the account of these apostles' journey and labours, when they left *Perga*, they

13. *Peris*, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and sat down.

15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

17. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt.

went further northward, till they came to *Antioch*, the capital city of *Pisidia*; * and there, according to custom, they went to the synagogue, where Jews and devout *Gentiles* (ver. 16.) were assembled for religious worship, on the Sabbath-day; and set themselves down in a proper place among them, hoping for an opportunity of speaking to the whole congregation†.

15. And after the sections of the law and prophets, appointed for that day, were read as usual ‡; the ruler of the synagogue understanding that *Paul* and *Barnabas* bore a public character as extraordinary prophets, sent to let them know that they might have the free liberty of the synagogue, (see the notes on *Luke* iv. 16, 17.) saying, in a style of civility and respect, Ye men and brethren, who are partakers of the same human nature, and descended from the same father of the faithful with ourselves, if ye are inclined to expound what has been read, or to give any word of exhortation or consolation (*παρηγορησαι*) to the people, be pleased to let us hear it.

16. Then *Paul* got up, and making a sign for silence, by a motion of his hand, addressed them in the following manner: Ye descendants of our father *Jacob*, and Jews by religion; and ye devout *Gentiles*, who profess to worship the God of *Israel*, (see the note on *chap.* viii. 27.) I beseech you to hear with attention, impartiality, and patience, the important things I am going to deliver according to the scriptures, which ye all own to be the word of God:

17. The only living and true *Jehovah*, who made the heavens and the earth, even the covenant-God, and the great King of the *Israelitish* church and nation, made choice of our ancestors, as his peculiar favourites, in distinction from all the rest of the world; and though at first they were but few in number, he, for

N O T E S.

* This *Antioch* is different from that mentioned ver. 1. That was the metropolis of Syria, and this of *Pisidia*, a country in the Lesser Asia; and both were called *Antioch*, as is most generally thought, by *Seleucus Nicator*, who built them, and gave them that name in honour of his father *Antiochus*.

† Though the apostles constantly observed the Lord's day, as the New Testament-Sabbath, for celebrating all religious ordinances in Christian assemblies; yet they took opportunities of going to the synagogues of the Jews on their Sabbath, because then the greatest company of them were gathered together.

‡ The law and the prophets were each of them divided, say some, into fifty-two, or, say others, into fifty-three, or fifty-four sections; and by reading of one section of each every Sabbath-day, or joining two of the shortest, once or twice in the year, if there were occasion for it, the Jews used to read over those parts of the Old Testament in their synagogues once a-year; but the *Hagiographa*, which are called the *Psalms*, in distinction from the law and the prophets, were not publicly read among them. See *Lightfoot*, Vol. I. p. 533. and Vol. II. p. 1102. and *Weems's exercises*, Vol. III. p. 175.

Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave unto them judges, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

for his own name's sake, signally multiplied, preferred, and countenanced them, while they sojourned about two hundred and sixteen years, as strangers in the land of *Egypt*: And when the king of that country, envying their prosperity, laid them under grievous oppressions, the Lord delivered them out of their house of bondage by wonderful signs and miracles, which his almighty power wrought on their behalf.

18 He likewise gave them his statutes and ordinances to direct and regulate their religion and morals; and when, notwithstanding all this, they soon rebelled against him, he, in his amazing patience and long suffering, bore with their ingratitude, perverseness, and unbelief; yea, with their murmurings, mutinies, and idolatry, and other numerous provocations, for about forty years in the wilderness of *Sinai**; and all along provided for them with the tenderest care, and by a train of miracles. (*Deut. i. 31.*)

19 And when he, in his righteous judgment, had cut off seven wicked and idolatrous nations for their iniquities, that were in possession of the land of *Canaan*, to make way for his chosen people, (*Job. iii. 10.*) he gave them the inheritance of that fruitful country, a figure of the heavenly one, which was divided among them by lot.

20 And here they continued, for about four hundred and fifty years, under the immediate government of God himself; who, as occasions required, raised up, and eminently spirited, a sort of extraordinary officers called *Judges*, that they, under him as the only Sovereign, might rule his people *Israel*, fight their battles, vindicate their rights, and deliver them out of the hands of surrounding enemies, who were frequently troublesome to them; under which form of government they continued till the days of the famous prophet *Samuel*.

21 But after all this indulgent care and kindness, which God had shewn them, they, wanting to be like the nations round about them, ungratefully desired a king to be set over them: And God, highly displeased with them for rejecting him, that he might not reign over them, and preferring a temporal monarch to him, granted their request in judgment to them; (*1 Sam. viii.*) and appointed *Saul*, the son of *Cis*, of the tribe of *Benjamin*, to be their king, whose reign, together with *Samuel's* preceding government, filled up the space of forty years.

22 And

N O T E.

* Several copies and versions of confusion suffered their manners. Vid. Mil. in derable reputation read *εργαστονομία*, he loc. And that is the word used by the nourished them, instead of *εργαστονομία*, Seventy in *Deut. i. 31.*

11 And when
he had removed
him, he raised up
unto them David
to be their king;
to whom also he
gave testimony, and
said, I have found
David the son of
Jesse, a man after
mine own heart,
which shall fulfil
all my will.

22 And when God had rejected, (1 Sam. xv. 28.) and in his providence taken away, this prince, who had disobeyed his commands, and perverted the true ends of government; he, in his great goodness, appointed, spirited, qualified, raised up from a low and mean state, and enthroned *David* to be their king; a man of eminent wisdom, piety, and valour, to whom the Lord himself bore an honourable testimony, saying, I have pitched upon, and provided a king, even *David*, my servant, the son of *Jesse* the *Beithlehemite*, of the tribe of *Judah*, (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) a man whom I know and approve of, and who will be ready to answer all my designs and orders in governing the people: By all which ye may see how free and sovereign, undeserved, and yet abundant, the care and kindness of God have been to his people *Israel*, through various dispensations, as so many types and specimens of the further favour he intended for them, by settling the Messiah's kingdom on *David's* house.

23 Of this man's
seed hath God, ac-
cording to his pro-
mise, raised unto
Israel a Saviour,

23 Of whose offspring, as pertaining to the flesh, God, according to his promise, first to this great man himself, (*Psal.* cxxxii. 11.) and afterwards to the whole church, (*Isa.* xi. 1, 2.) has now at length authorized and qualified, exhibited and exalted, and first of all sent to his own covenant-people, the *Israelites*, *Jesus Christ*, whom he has raised up as an horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant *David*, (*Luke* i. 69.) to deliver them from sin and misery, and advance them to heavenly glory.

24 When John
first preached
before his coming,
the baptism of re-
pentance to all the
people of Israel.

24 To introduce this glorious Saviour, in a manner suitable to the dignity of his person and office, *John the Baptist*, going before him in the spirit and power of *Elias*, to prepare the way for his appearing in his public ministry, preached the necessity of repentance to all the people of *Israel*, without distinction; and called upon them to make a solemn profession of it, by being baptized in the name of the approaching Messiah, that they might obtain remission of sins through faith in him. (*Mark* i. 4. and *Luke* iii. 3.)

25 And as John
filled his course,
he said, Whom
think ye that I
am not he.
Behold, there
cometh one after
me, whose shoes of
feet I am not
worthy to loose.

25 And in the course of *John's* ministry, when, toward the close of it, his reputation grew, and was established, and the people began to have a notion as though he were the Messiah himself, he said to them, What do ye take me to be? if ye imagine that I am the promised Messiah, whom all of you are now in expectation of, ye are under a great mistake; for I assure you, that I am not he. (*John* i. 20.) But behold, said he, I bring you the best of tidings; there is one just at hand, ready to appear in his public character, who is indeed the Christ; and, compared with whom, I am so very mean and contemptible, as
to

to be utterly unworthy of performing the most humble service of taking off his shoes.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

26 This brings us to the main point, which the apostles of Christ, are driving at in speaking to you, whom we look upon, and would treat, with the utmost respect and earnest solicitude for your welfare, as ye are rational creatures, that are capable of considering, and have immortal souls to be saved, or lost for ever, and as ye are our brethren partakers of flesh and blood, and children of the promise together with ourselves, even all of you, whether ye be the natural seed of Abraham or devout Gentiles, that worship the God of Israel; we, in the name of our great Lord and Master, do, for your caution and encouragement, declare to all and every one of you, that the gospel, which shews the only true way of spiritual and eternal salvation, by Jesus Christ, is now sent, by his commission, to be published to you, and freely proposed to your acceptance, as persons that need it, and are concerned in it, though it was first of all sent to them that dwell at Jerusalem, and in Judea, and Galilee.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

27 For to take off your prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth, on account of his ignominious death, and to shew what abundant grace is in his heart to the worst of his enemies; let it be seriously considered, that the common people at Jerusalem, and the chief priests and rulers, who stirred them up against him, joined together in procuring his crucifixion, because they really did not know who this Lord of glory was, nor yet understand the true meaning of what was foretold concerning him by their own prophecies which are read in their synagogues every Sabbath-day: (see the note on ver. 15.) But as it was owing to their own perverseness, that they were strangers to these things; so their ignorance, and their wickedness, in condemning him, as an impostor and malefactor, were over-ruled, by the wisdom of God, in such a manner, that they themselves thereby, unwittingly, and contrary to their own design, exactly fulfilled those very prophecies concerning him, which foretold the Messiah's sufferings and death.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

28 And though they could prove no crime upon him, for which he deserved to die; and the Roman governor himself, before whom he was tried, declared that he found no fault in him; (Luke xxiii.) yet so malicious and outrageous were they against him, that they insisted, and incessantly pleaded, till they prevailed with Pilate, even against his will, that he should be put to death.

29 And when they

29 And when, by this their ill usage of him, the

they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead :

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

had accomplished all that is recorded in the ancient prophecies, relating to the manner of his death, even to the most minute circumstances of it ; they, being assured that he was really dead, consented to *Pilate's* order, that he should be taken down from the cross, and should be laid in a sepulchre, as one that ought to be buried, and kept as securely as possible under watch and seal, to prevent all fraud in removing his body, and all false pretences thereupon that he had revived again. (*Matth. xxvii. 58,—66.*)

30 But, notwithstanding all their malice and precautions, God raised him from the dead on the third day, to vindicate his character, and testify his own entire approbation of him ; and to shew that his law and justice were completely satisfied by his sufferings for the sins of all that should believe in him.

31 And, to put this important fact past all dispute, the risen Saviour was seen, and conversed with, at several times afterwards, in the space of forty days, by a great number of his disciples, men of unquestionable reputation for honesty, that were well acquainted with him, and had often attended his ministry, and travelled with him from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*, and so could not mistake any other person for him ; these he appointed to be witnesses of it ; and they accordingly have, in the face of all opposition and danger, and at the peril of their lives, attested it ; and as many of them as are still living continue to assert it to the people, with invariable unanimity and constancy, wherever they come, to this very day.

32, 33 And we ourselves, having seen the Lord Jesus since his resurrection, (*see the note on chap. ix. 17.*) readily join in their testimony ; and are come hither to proclaim to you the most joyful tidings that ever reached the ears of the sinful sons of men, *viz.* That God having in former ages made a gracious promise of the Messiah, in whom all nations should be blessed, and having often repeated it to the patriarchs, our pious ancestors, has now in his faithfulness actually accomplished it to us, their descendents, and the imitators of their faith ; forasmuch as he has given the highest proof and demonstration of the divine and office-character of our Jesus, in that he raised him up again from the dead ; and so shewed that he is the very person spoken of in the second *Psalm*, where the eternal Father is brought in, as saying to the Messiah, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* : That is, thou art my true and proper Son ; I in the unsuccessive day of my eternity have, in an ineffable manner, begotten thee ; and in the day

day of thy resurrection have I eminently manifested and declared it, and have further notified thee to be Lord and heir of all, as the first-begotten, and first-born from the dead, whom I have raised to all the honours of thy kingdom. (*Rev. i. 5.* and *Col. i. 18.*)

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

34 And it is plain that (*ver. di*) God the Father raised him from the dead, not to die again, as those did whom Christ raised in the days of his flesh on earth, but to be advanced to an immortal life of all authority, glory, and blessedness in heaven, never to die any more, (*Rom. vi. 9.*) or to be laid again in the grave, which is called the pit of corruption: (*Isa. xxxviii. 17.*) For in that everlasting covenant, in which God speaks of his Son, (*Isa. lv. 3, 4.*) as a witness, leader, and commander of the people, including Jews and Gentiles, even such as compose this assembly, he expresses himself to them after this manner, *I will give you the sure mercies of David*, meaning the great mercies, which he had freely promised, confirmed by oath, and would certainly perform in faithfulness to David and his house, relating to the perpetual blessings of the Messiah's seed and kingdom, (*Psal. lxxxix. 1, 5.* and *13, 37.*) and which should be fulfilled in that descendent of David, who was typified by, and mentioned under the name of his royal father; and was, by way of eminence, called the Son of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption:

35 Therefore, still more exactly to characterize the only true Messiah, he, in another of the *Psalms* is brought in as saying, with holy confidence to God his Father, (*Psal. xvi. 10.*) Thou, in thy mercy faithfulness, and justice to me, and my cause, wilt not permit thy holy One, meaning his Anointed, or his Christ, to continue so long in the state of the dead as that his body should be corrupted in the grave. This could not be literally true of David himself.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

36 For we all know, that after David, the ancient king of Israel, had fulfilled the duty of his day, in the many good services which he did to his contemporaries, and by doing which he was a public blessing to that age, according to the commanding and disposing will of God; he then, by divine ordination, rested from his labours at death, like one who, after the toils of the day, falls asleep at night, and thereupon was laid in the grave, the house appointed for all living, (*Job xxx. 23.*) as his ancestors had been before him; and his body has, long before this, been turned into corruption and dust.

37 But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

37 But the forementioned words were remarkably fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God, according to this prediction, raised again on the third day before

before the time that a dead carcase, not worn with sickness, nor loaded with physie, and embalmed as the body of Jesus was, (*John xix. 40.*) uses to putrify; and so his body, by these means, as well as by a special providence, was not subject to corruption, nor will it ever be so hereafter; God the Father, having now exalted him to an immortal state of glory, that by his perpetual agency in heaven for sinners on earth, he might be a public blessing, not to that generation only, in which he lived here below, but to all ages, till time shall be no more.

38 It is therefore a matter of vast importance to be known, and taken notice of, as we now declare it to you of the human race, whom we delight to think of, and speak to, as our brethren, and hope to have you so in Christ, that an act of grace for the free and full remission of sins is now, by a divine warrant, proclaimed to each and every one of you, through the merit, and on account of this Jesus, who was partaker of human nature, and in that nature was once crucified, and is now exalted at the Father's right hand; that upon this ground ye severally may be encouraged to come to God, through him, for this inestimable blessing, which involves, and leads the way to all others.

39 And through his blood and righteousness, who died in the room and stead of sinners, and lives in heaven to make intercession for them, every one that is brought to rely upon him, and receive him by faith, as the only Saviour, is so completely justified, as to be entirely discharged from the guilt of all his sins, even of such as are so great, that no sacrifice was appointed for them in the ceremonial law; and as to be freed from all the condemnation due to them, from which he never could have been acquitted, by virtue of any works commanded, or any sentence pronounced, in any part of the law of *Moses*.

40 Take heed therefore to yourselves, I beseech you, especially you of the *Jewish* race, that, through the perverseness of your own hearts, ye do not obstinately reject this our gracious errand to you; lest that awful and alarming threatening be applicable to, and executed upon you, for so provoking a sin, in the utter destruction of your nation in this world, and more dreadful ruin of your own souls in the next, which God spake by one of the prophets, (*Habak. i. 5.*) with reference to the terrible havock that was made by the *Chaldeans* on the *Jews* of that age, who persisted in their iniquities, notwithstanding all the messages he sent by the prophets to reclaim them.

The

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

43 Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and devout

The purport of whose words, as they may be well accommodated to the present case, is this:

41 Behold, with dread and horror, the irreversible sentence I pronounce against you, O ye contemners of my solemn warnings, and of my kindest messages of peace to you; and stand amazed at your own stupidity and perverseness in rejecting them, and at the righteous vengeance that is coming upon you on this account; yea, (*ἀπαυθύνετε*) let your faces be covered with paleness, and hide yourselves, for fear and shame, at the thought of your astonishing perdition for, and in your iniquities: For, in this present age, I have wrought the greatest work of mercy that ever was brought about in the redemption of my people; and for your infidelity with respect thereunto, I will bring to pass a surprising work of judgment to some, and of mercy to others, in utterly abandoning you, and calling the *Gentiles* in your stead; neither of which will ye regard, or give any manner of credit to, though it be ever so plainly, fully, and demonstratively declared to you, by any whom I have commissioned to assure you of it.

42 And when those *Jews* that resolutely persisted in their unbelief were so exasperated at this clear and touching discourse of the apostle's, that they went out of the synagogue, to shew their public dislike and contempt of him, and of his doctrine, yet and of Christ himself, whom he preached to them, then the *Gentiles* earnestly entreated him to favour them so far as to preach another sermon to them upon the following Sabbath*, to instruct them in the important truths of the gospel, which so many of the *Jews* had despised, and turned their backs upon.

43 Now, when the assembly was dismissed, a considerable number of *Jews* and † devout *Gentiles* were so affected and impressed with what they had heard

NOTES.

* The words (*ἵνα το μᾶζον σαββάτου*) here translated the *next Sabbath*, are a very uncommon phrase, and might be most literally rendered *between the Sabbath*, meaning between this Sabbath and the next; or if the word (*σαββάτου*) be taken to signify a *week*, as it is in chap. xx. 7. Luke xviii. 12. and xxiv. 1. and several other places, they may be rendered *in the middle of the week*; and were it not that, in ver. 44. we are told, all the city, including the *Gentiles*, came together the next Sabbath-day to hear the word of God, I should incline to understand this, as a request of the *Gentiles*, that as Paul was employed in preaching to the *Jews* on their Sab-

baths, he would spend some time on week-days in preaching to them: this, together with a like sense of the word *μᾶζον* as signifying the *next, following*, seems rather to favour the sense given in the Paraphrase, unless also, in ver. 42. take the Sabbath to signify the *week*. Vid. Pol. Synop. Crit.

† The religious or worshipping proselytes, (*εὐσεβεῖς*) and the devout or religious Greeks, and devout persons worshippers, (chap. xvi. 14. and xvii. 17.) were proselytes of the gate, who renounced idolatry, and worshipped the God of Israel. See Mr. Jos. Mede's *disc.* iii. p. 27. Vol. I.

of the Jews and proselytes, who, after Paul and Barnabas, who, looking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44. And the next day came, and the whole assembly together to hear the word of God.

45. But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and began to contradict Paul and Barnabas, saying, They are called the Gentiles, ver. 42, 46, 49. And when the apostles returned to Antioch, they reported, (chap. 27.) how, in this journey, God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles,

Christ, and the forgiveness of sins through faith in him, that they embraced the apostles' doctrine; and so became followers of them and of the Lord, and went after them to their lodging, that they might be further instructed in the way of salvation; and the apostles, rejoicing to see what God had wrought in them, discoursed freely with them, and urged upon them the necessity, the pleasure, and advantage of their continuing to adhere stedfastly, in their hearts, to the truths of the gospel, which proceed from the free favour of God, display its glory, raise our hopes in it, and are the means of conveying its blessings to us; and they excited them to persevere in a solemn and holy profession of these doctrines of grace. (*Heb. xiii. 9. and 1 Pet. v. 13.*)

44. And as Paul and Barnabas left no means unattempted, for private instruction, all the following week-days; so, on the next Sabbath, they, according to the earnest request that had been made to them, (*ver. 42.*) took an opportunity of preaching publicly, and particularly to all such Gentiles as should come to hear them: And the inhabitants of the city, even the idolatrous as well as devout Gentiles, having notice of it, came together almost universally, some out of curiosity, others with worse, and others with better motives, to hear the gospel, which God is the author of, and which he had given his servants a commission, now at length, to preach to them. (*Chap. i. 8. and Luke xxiv. 47.*)

45. But when the unbelieving Jews saw such vast crowds assembled together, and among them many idolatrous Gentiles, to attend on the apostles' ministrations, they swelled with envy, indignation, and rage,

which must mean the idolatrous Gentiles, because that door had been opened to the devout Gentiles, at the conversion of Cornelius, long before. Thus the gospel was gradually published, first to the Jews and proselytes of righteousness, who were of the same church with them; then to the devout Gentiles, or proselytes of the gate; and now, at length, to the idolatrous Gentiles, and that upon their own request here, as it had been to Sergius Paulus at his request before, *ver. 7.* And, from this time forward, it was preached by Paul and Barnabas chiefly to these, though not without first offering it to the Jews, where there were any of them in the places to which Providence called these apostles. (See the note on *ver. 46.*)

and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

rage, at their being so openly favoured with the messages of grace, and shewing such attention and regard to its preachers, as Christ foretold they would, in the parable of the elder brother's being angry and surly at the return of the prodigal son; (*Luke xv. 28, 29, 30.*) and they set themselves to cavil and dispute against, and run down the doctrines that Paul preached; and not only disputed, but spoke reproachfully in an outrageous manner against them, even to the blaspheming of the glorious name of the Lord Jesus who was the principal subject of the apostle's discourse (*ver. 16, 41.*) and blaspheming the blessed Spirit as if all his gifts and operations, by which their doctrine was delivered and confirmed, were impostures of the devil*.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles:

46 But Paul and Barnabas, being inspired with a holy zeal for their Lord and Master's glory, and the conversion of the poor idolatrous Gentiles, and with an undaunted courage and resolution, which the present circumstances of things called for, replied with awful boldness to those Jews, saying, The privileges of birth-right, which belonged to you, and the covenant made with your fathers, as well as the appointment of God, and Christ's own express order laid us under a necessity, which we cheerfully complied with, of publishing this new dispensation of the word of God's grace, in the first place to you: But this is not, like the *Mosaic* dispensation, to be confined to you; and since ye so shamefully abuse this indulgence and kindness, and so openly disclaim, obstinately reject, and maliciously vilify these glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and thereby evidently pass judgment against yourselves, as persons that are utterly unworthy of any further tenders of the blessed doctrine of eternal life; behold the wisdom of God, as seasonably displayed in his severity and goodness on this occasion! Our way is now plain, and we henceforth shall make no scruple of turning away from such desperate refusers†, and freely preach

NOTES.

* This envious and malicious contradicting and blaspheming, under all the light and evidence that these Jews may be supposed to have had, looks very like the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Lord spoke of as what should never be forgiven; and therefore it is no wonder that the apostle, on this occasion, spoke such severe things against them, and turned to the Gentiles. (See the note on *Matth. xii. 31.*)

† The apostle did not hereby intend

that he would never preach again to any of the Jews; for we find that after this it was his custom to do it in all other places, where he met with them. (*Chap. xvii. 2.*) But he meant that he would no longer preach to those refractory Jews, at this Antioch, and would no longer confine his ministrations to that sort of people; but would immediately preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and take all opportunities ever afterwards of doing so.

ing Christ to the *Gentiles*, of what rank soever they be; and this we are impowered to do, by a divine warrant from those scriptures which ye yourselves own to be the word of God.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have let thee to be a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth.

47 For this is not only what the Lord Jesus himself has commanded us, (*chap. i. 8.*) but what God the Father likewise, in a famous prophecy of these days, has, by just construction, enjoined upon us, as the ministers of Christ, when, in a foreview of the unbelief of the *Jews*, he said, by way of encouragement and promise to the Messiah, (*Isa. xlix. 6.*) I have granted and constituted thee to be a glorious light, to enlighten the dark minds of the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest be the sum and substance, and the purchaser, author, and giver of a spiritual and eternal salvation to them, wherever they are spread abroad in all nations, even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

48 And when the *idolatrous Gentiles* heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

48 And when the *idolatrous Gentiles* heard with what favour the apostles spoke of *them*, as by warrant and command from Christ, and from God himself; they rejoiced to think that they might be admitted to all the blessings of the gospel, without being obliged to submit to circumcision and the ceremonial law; and they wonderfully extolled the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, which, with so much condescension and grace, was preached to them: And though many of these were only like the stony ground hearers, that received the word with joy, (*Luke viii. 13.*) and like the attendants on Christ's ministry, who, when he was opening a prophecy concerning himself, wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; (*Luke iv. 22.*) yet (some) such of them as were appointed*, or laid out for the inheritance of endless life and glory,

N O T E.

As the word (*ταταγμενοι*) signifies disposed, or set in order, in allusion to a general's ordering of soldiers to their respective posts in an army, as well as ordered or appointed, I have taken in these senses; but cannot think that it, at least, signifies an internal disposition of heart, much less that these persons disposed themselves to eternal life: all such dispositions are from God. *works in us both to will and to do good pleasure.* (*Phil. ii. 13.*) and rather the fruit and consequence, on the cause of that faith which purifies the heart: (*chap. xv. 9.*) Nor does it appear to me, that the verb, (*ταταγμενοι*) which, in its signification, transitive, is ever used in the New Testament, and particularly by the writer of this history, to signify disposing

one's self, or determining one's own inclinations, unless some other word be added to express that meaning: The principal passage pleaded for it, is in *chap. xx. 13.* which is rendered, *we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul, for so had he appointed, minding himself to go a-foot.* But it seems to me, that the true sense of the expression (*Ουτω γαρ ην διαταγμενος*) is not, *for so had he appointed*, but *for so it was appointed*, or *determined*, viz. by an agreement between him and the ship's company, before they set sail; they agreed beforehand to take him in at *Assos*, because he had a mind to go thither a-foot: And as this is consonant to that sense of the word, by which God's ordaining persons to life is expressed; so in all other places,

glory, in the holy, wise, and sovereign disposal of God, according to the eternal counsel and purpose of his will, (*Eph. i. 11.*) were so effectually wrought upon by his Spirit, that they believed in Christ to the saving of their souls.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

49 And after this, by the diligent and successful labours of the apostles, and by means of these Gentile converts, who were ready to tell what God had done for their souls, and were very desirous of the salvation of others; the gospel of the Lord Jesus, which was so full of him, and derived its authority from him (*in Deputo*) was carried and divulged, with rich advantage, through the whole country of *Pisidia*. (*ver. 14.*)

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

50 But, as has been observed, (*ver. 45.*) the *fidel Jews* were so enraged at the idolatrous Gentiles being received into the kingdom of the Messiah, that they, having little interest in those parts themselves, used their utmost endeavours, by artful, malicious and scandalous misrepresentations, to provoke, and stir up some women of quality, who were zealous pharisees of the gate; and, by their means, to incite the chief magistrates of the city against the apostles and their doctrine; and so they spirited up a violent persecution against *Paul and Barnabas*; insomuch that orders were issued out to banish these kind messengers of peace from those territories; and they were forced to fly for their own safety, which Providence over-ruled for the still further propagation of the gospel.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

51 But, on leaving that city and its borders, they, according to our Lord's direction and order, (*Luc. ix. 5.*) shook off the dust of their feet, to testify just abhorrence and contempt of this wicked and ungrateful people, and God's casting off all further

NOTE.

ces, where our sacred historian uses it, it is still in the same sort of sense, as particularly in *chap. xv. 2.* and *xxii. 10.* and *xxviii. 13.* and *Luc. vii. 8.*; and thus it is used in *Matth. xxviii. 16.* and *Rom. xiii. 1.* which are all the places that I can meet with where it is found in the New Testament, except *1 Cor. xvi. 15.* and there *σάκετε τὰς σάλεις*; is rendered, *they addicted themselves*; but as neither *σάκετε*; themselves, nor any thing like it, is added in the place before us, there is no reason to understand it of these persons being well disposed, or disposing themselves to eternal life: For I take their being ordained to eternal life to be mentioned, not in opposition to the contradicting and blaspheming *Jews*, spoken

of in *ver. 45.* but in distinction from others of this company that were *glorified the word of the Lord*, and are spoken of in the former part of the verse. These seemed to be as much disposed for eternal life as the rest; but the work went no further, than to set up affections of joy and wonder in the multitude, in whom it proceeded to saving faith, even in such as were *ordained of God unto eternal life*; and intimates, not that all the elect in the assembly believed at the same time; that among them, in whom there were such promising appearances, those were chosen to eternal life did *firmly believe*.

and kindness for them : And then these indefatigable preachers proceeded to *Iconium*, the chief city of *Lycaonia*, a neighbouring province in the *Lesser Asia*.

52 In the mean while, the disciples of Christ at the *Pisidian Antioch*, especially those of them that had been converted from heathenism ; though they had lost the desirable company of the apostles, and seen the inhuman persecutions they suffered ; yet observing with what faith, patience, and holy magnanimity they endured them, were filled with abundance of divine consolation, and were likewise enriched with such assistances, graces, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, as confirmed their faith, and inspired them with a noble courage in their profession of it *.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How important are the directions of God's Spirit and providence for due ministrations of his gospel ! He lays out the work of his servants, qualifies them for it, calls and separates them to it, in ways, among people, and by means of his own appointment, and succeeds them in it. And with what pleasure, courage, and diligence may they set about it, when they are satisfied that he has sent them ! But how great is the opposition, that Satan and his instruments make, to the most gracious and holy revelation of the divine will, especially when the greatest sinners, who had long been his slaves, are like to be converted by it ! All the arts of sorcery on one hand, and of infidelity on the other ; all the fury that blind zeal, bigotry, temporal interest, and envy can inspire ; and all the powers of this world, are stirred up to suppress it, and the work of God by it : And yet no weapon formed against *Sion* shall prosper ; but the word of salvation, attended with the power of the blessed Spirit, shall so much the more run, and spread, and be glorified. And O what joyful tidings does the gospel bring of the promised Saviour, for whose coming all former dispensations to *Israel* prepared the way, till *John the Baptist* was raised up as his immediate forerunner ; and who was crucified and raised again from the dead, according to Old-Testament prophecies of the Messiah ! With what infinitely wise and seasonable advances has the knowledge of Christ spread, and prevailed in our world ! He, through the wonderful condescension and grace of God, is now preached, even to the worst of *Gentile* sinners ; and the gospel of salvation is now sent, by a divine order, to us, who live, so distant from *Palestine*, in the ends of the earth ! Christ is now set up as a light to us, and through him is preached to us the forgiver of sins. O happy souls, who heartily believe in a once crucified, and now risen Jesus ! They were ordained to eternal life before all worlds, are completely justified, through the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, from all sins and charges, from which they could not be justified by the law of *Moses* ; and, under a sense of this, they not only think and speak honourably of the word of the Lord ; but are filled with holy joy, and have such supplies of the divine Spirit, as are needful for their establishment and edification ; and they are encouraged, as well as obliged, to continue in the doctrine of the grace of God, in the exercise of every grace, and in a profession of Christ's name and gospel.

NOTE.

* These were the first considerable church that was gathered from among the idolatrous *Gentiles* at this *Antioch*, (chap. xiv. 20, 21, 22.) though the door of faith had been opened to them at the *Paphos*, ver. 6. as the first famous church was gathered from among the proselytes of the gate, at the other *Antioch* in *Syria*, ver. 1. after the like door had been opened at *Cæsarea* to them.

chap. x. And it is highly probable that, as the Holy Ghost fell down immediately upon the first fruits of the devout *Gentiles*, (chap. x. 44, 45.) so he did upon this first company of converts from among the idolatrous *Gentiles* ; and that in this manner, without the laying on of the apostles hands, they were filled with the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts, as well as saving graces.

gospel, with holy boldness, notwithstanding all the persecution they may suffer for his sake. But, on the other hand, how dreadfully, at their peril, do unbelievers and especially such as are visibly in covenant with God, reject and despise the only Saviour, and set themselves to reproach his servants, truths, and ways! They resolutely put away the gospel and eternal life from themselves, and provoke God to cast them off in his hot displeasure; as a people whom he justly abhors; and they must perish with astonishment and confusion for ever. But blessed be God that while some desperately harden their hearts against Christ, and others only applaud the doctrine of salvation by him; he has a people that shall believe in him to everlasting life; and among these there are some, who, like *Sergius Paulus* are men of sense and figure; and others, who, like the idolatrous heathens, are the most vile and stupid sinners: So free, sovereign, and victorious is gospel-grace!

C H A P XIV.

Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel at Iconium, from whence they are driven by a Jewish persecution to neighbouring towns, 1,—7. At Lystra, a cripple is miraculously healed, and the people there upon are scarce restrained from offering sacrifice to the two apostles, as incarnate gods; and yet soon after, by the instigation of the Jews, they stoned Paul, till they thought they had killed him, 8,—20. The apostles visit the churches which they had lately planted, to confirm them, and settle pastors in them, 21,—23. And then return to Antioch in Syria, to report what God had done, by them, in this their first journey among the idolatrous Gentiles, 24,—28.

TEXT.

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed.

PARAPHRASE.

WHEN Paul and Barnabas were at the forementioned Iconium, (*chap. xiii. 51.*) they, still continuing the custom of offering the gospel first to the Jews, repaired to their synagogue at the time of public worship; and went into it together, to show their joint concurrence in their Lord's work, and their mutual affection to each other, as well as to add the greater weight to their testimony; and these apostles preached to the people there, in so clear and convincing, judicious and scriptural, moving and affectionate a manner, like persons who heartily believed the importance, as well as the truth of the doctrines they delivered, and were earnestly concerned for the salvation of their hearers; and they spoke with such evident demonstration of the Spirit and power, to the heart and conscience, that abundance both of Jews and Gentile proselytes of the gate, who were called devout Greeks, and used to attend synagogue-worship, believed in Christ as the only Saviour.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and

2 But the greater success the gospel had, the more the devil was enraged at it; and those Jews that persisted in their infidelity, finding they had not strength

made their
evil-affected
against the bre-

strength enough of themselves to put a stop to it, let their wits to work, to spirit up the idolatrous *Gentiles*, into an opposition against it; and by injurious and malicious suggestions, prejudiced their minds, not only against the apostles and their doctrine, but likewise against all those, whether *Jews* or *Greeks*, and especially the latter, that were newly converted, and become brethren in the household of faith.

Long time
therefore abode
they, speaking
boldly in the
land, which gave
testimony unto the
word of his grace,
and granted signs
and wonders to
be done by their
hands.

3 The apostles therefore * spent a considerable time at this city, to take off, and confute the prejudices that had been raised against the glorious truths which God had so abundantly owned; and they spoke publicly and openly with great liberty of spirit, undaunted courage, and holy confidence, in the cause of the Lord Jesus, and by his powerful assistance, as persons united to him; who strengthened them with might by his Spirit in the inward man; and bore witness to the divine authority of the gospel, which springs from, and contains the richest discoveries of his own, as well as the Father's free and undeserved grace, by enabling them to perform such wonderful miracles of various kinds, as could be no less than an attestation to it from God himself. (See the note on *chap. ii. 22.*)

But the mul-
titude of the city
was divided: and
they were held with the
Jews, and part with
the apostles.

4 And (δε) notwithstanding the malicious endeavours of the unbelieving *Jews* to incense the citizens, who were chiefly *Gentiles*, so many were wrought upon by the apostles' ministrations, that there was a great division between them; one party siding with the obstinate *Jews*, and the other with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, which, for a while, restrained the persecution.

5 And when
there was an as-
sault made both
on the *Gentiles*,
and also of the
Jews, with their
design, to use *Stephen*
treacherously, and to
kill them,

5 But (δε) when, at length, the opposing party, of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, combined together with the magistrates, whom they had gained over, to make an open, violent attempt for running down, and destroying the apostles, by reviling them, and stoning them to death, as blasphemers, (*Deut. xiii. 6, — 10.*) in like manner, and for the same cause, as *Paul* himself in the days of his blind zeal and unbelief, had consented to the stoning of *Stephen*. (*Chap. viii. 1.*)

They were
driven out of it, and
came unto *Lysitra*
and

6 The apostles being informed of this barbarous conspiracy, in which the most inveterate enemies one to another were united, under Satan's influence, against

NOTE.

Some critics observe, that the par-
ticular (αὐτῶν) may be rendered for in-
stead, instead of therefore; and so think
that this refers to the time which the a-
postles had spent at *Iconium*, before the
storm stirred up the *Gentiles* against
them, and gives the reason of their rage:

But as I cannot bring both senses into a
consistent paraphrase, and this render-
ing seems not to be the most genuine
and usual, I rather prefer that which our
translation has given us with undoubted
propriety.

and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and into the region that lieth round about.

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And as they went down the hill, they saw a certain man, who was lame from his birth, sitting by the side of the way, and he had heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

12 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

13 And as they went down the hill, they saw a certain man, who was lame from his birth, sitting by the side of the way, and he had heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

14 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

15 And as they went down the hill, they saw a certain man, who was lame from his birth, sitting by the side of the way, and he had heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

16 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

17 And as they went down the hill, they saw a certain man, who was lame from his birth, sitting by the side of the way, and he had heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

18 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

19 And as they went down the hill, they saw a certain man, who was lame from his birth, sitting by the side of the way, and he had heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

20 Said with a loud voice, Stand up, right on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

gainst Christ, and against his servants and gospel, had ended away with all speed from thence, and went to Lystra and Derbe, two other towns or cities of Lycaonia, and to the neighbouring villages, that the might spread the gospel in those places, according to our Lord's direction for improving such events. (Mat. x. 23.)

7 And they preached the glad tidings of salvation with good success, (ver. 21, 22.) in these cities, and in all parts of the country round about.

8 And while they were one day preaching at Lystra, the inhabitants of which were mostly heathens, there sat in the assembly a certain man, who was lame in his feet, and had been so great a cripple from his very birth, that he had never been able to walk; the wisdom of Providence having brought him thither, that the apostles might have an opportunity of working a public miracle, to confirm their doctrine, at their first coming among this idolatrous people.

9, 10 This man was very attentive to Paul's discourse, who fixing his eyes stedfastly upon him, and perceiving, partly by his serious countenance and behaviour, but principally by an extraordinary spirit discerning, that he believed and hoped in the power of Christ for a cure, was filled with compassion toward him, and said with a loud voice, that all the people might hear, and the work of God might be made manifest, I command you * in the name of the Lord Jesus, whom I preach, and in whom you believe, to rise up immediately, and stand on your feet. And he no sooner spake, than the man nimbly sprang up with abundance of joy; and, to shew that he was perfectly recovered to the use of his limbs, walked about in the presence of all the company, which had never been capable of doing before: And the gospel, soon after it was first preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, was confirmed with just the same sort of miracle, by the apostle Paul, as it had been by the apostle Peter, quickly after it began to be published to the Jews, in his healing one at the gate of the temple, who had likewise been born a cripple (chap. iii. 1, &c.) both of which were lively emblems of the spiritual impotence of all mankind, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, from their birth, and

NOTE

* Several copies and versions, mention Paul's speaking these words to the cripple, in the name of the Lord Jesus: (vid. Mill. in loc.) And we may be sure that this was implied, and some way intimated, and can scarce doubt but that it was expressed in so many words, on such a remarkable occasion, as the first introduction of the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles; since this was the usual way in which he and the other apostles worked their miracles. (See note on chap. iii. 6.)

of the power of divine grace to put strength into them for walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

11 And when the idolatrous Gentile part of the auditory saw what an undoubtedly miraculous cure was wrought, in an instant, at *Paul's* only speaking a few words, they were exceedingly astonished; and, in an ecstasy of joy, cried out aloud, as with one voice, in their own *Lycæonian* language, which was a dialect of the *Greek* tongue, These are certainly two of our gods, whom we worship, that are come down from heaven *, as we have heard they sometimes do, in the shape of men, to make a kind visit to us.

12 And as *Barnabas* seemed to be a person of the most venerable aspect, and advanced age and stature, and most upon the reserve of the two; they imagined, and pronounced him to be *Jupiter*, their chief god: And as they accounted *Mercury*, to be the messenger, and interpreter of the mind and will of their superior deities, and the attendant of *Jupiter*, whenever he descended to this lower world; they agreed that it was *he* who appeared in the form of *Paul*, because this apostle was the most free and forward in discourse and action.

13 Then the priest of *Jupiter*, hearing how the people cried them up for gods, and spoke of one of them as the deity, to whom he used to officiate before his image in his temple, which stood in the suburbs of the city, as its patron and guardian, thought it his duty to pay religious homage to them; and therefore he, attended with a vast multitude of the idolatrous inhabitants, went in solemn procession to the gates of the house where the apostles lodged, and brought with them oxen, crowned with garlands of flowers and ribbons, to intimate that they were dedicated to the honour of their idols; and they designed to offer the oxen in sacrifice to *Barnabas* and *Paul*, and to place the garlands upon their heads, in like manner as they were used to crown the statues of their fictitious deities.

14 But the apostles, *Barnabas* and *Paul*, perceiving their idolatrous intent, were so far from allowing

NOTE

* It was a common notion among the heathens, which they had taken from the philosophers as well as poets, that their gods were in shape like men, and never appeared in any other form. See *Gretna* and *Whitby*. But how amazingly did the prince of darkness blind the minds of them who believed not; that though, under his influence, the

Jews would not own Christ's Godhead, but sacrificed him to their rage, while they saw him work innumerable miracles; yet the heathens were so stupid, as, on seeing mere mortal men perform one wonderful work, to deify them, and go about to treat them with answerable homage.

nabas, and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities, unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful

lowing of it, and being pleased with it, as some of the heathen emperors were with the divine honours that were paid to them, or as *Herod* was with the blasphemous shouts of the people, when, in applause of his oration, they cried out, *It is the voice of god, and not of a man*, (chap. xii. 21, 22.) that on the contrary, they were extremely shocked at it, and, in zeal for the glory of God, rent their garments, in testimony of their indignation, grief, and abhorrence, and immediately rushed into the crowd, calling out to them with the greatest vehemence to forbear

15 And they reasoned with them, saying, Sirs, what do ye mean by this impious and absurd attempt? Though we are messengers sent with a divine commission to you, who have us in so high admiration, we can by no means admit of your invading the prerogative of God in worshipping us: For so far are we from being gods in human shape, that we are mere mortal men, who have our natural and sinful infirmities, and have human bodies and souls, of the very same frailty and affections with your own: And the great design of our doctrine, is to bring you off from all vain imaginations of deity in those whom ye call gods, but who really are not so; and to turn you from all your idols, which are either lifeless things, or dying, impotent, and unprofitable creatures, or rather mere vanities and nothing, (*Jer. xiv. 22.* and *1 Cor. viii. 4.*) to that God, who has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to all others, and is indeed the only true God, who created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all things contained therein, whether visible, or invisible, that are, or ever were made.

16 Who, as the great Governor of the world, has for many ages past, in his wise and holy, sovereign and righteous judgment, left all the nations of the *Gentiles* to the dim light of nature, as a just punishment for their iniquities, without any express revelation of his will, like that made to the *Jews*, or any other guide than their own consciences, to accuse or excuse them; (*Rom. ii. 15.*) and who, in his wonderful long-suffering and patience, has for many generations bore with them, while they walked in the perverse ways, which their own vain imaginations and foolish hearts invented and chose. (*Rom. i. 21.*)

17 And yet, all that time, he gave them plain evidences of his infinite wisdom and goodness, eternal power, and Godhead, (*Rom. i. 20.*) which were sufficient to teach them, that he alone ought to have been worshipped; inasmuch as he not only created them, but, in the course of his kind and all-disposing

fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness.

ing providence, constantly bestowed abundance of temporal mercies upon them; and this, among innumerable other instances, appears in that he has can-
 fed the clouds of heaven to water the earth with sea-
 sonable rains, and thereby fed its springs, and made
 it fruitful for a supply, not only of the necessities of
 mankind, both of the good and evil, but likewise of
 the conveniencies and comforts of life, that they
 might have a fulness of proper and delightful provi-
 sions, and be capable of eating them with pleasure:
 And so they were very criminal in abusing the light
 and mercies they enjoyed, by giving the glory to o-
 thers, which was due to him alone; and your guilt
 will be still more exceedingly aggravated, if, now
 the gospel of the grace of God is sent to you, ye
 should persist in paying idolatrous worship to us, or to
 any other creature whatsoever.

And with these
 signs, scarce re-
 membered they the
 people that they
 had not done sacri-
 fice unto them.

18 And it was with much ado, that the apostles,
 by all these earnest entreaties, moving exhortations,
 and solid reasonings, prevailed upon those poor hea-
 thens to desist from their abominable attempt of of-
 fering sacrifice to them: So fond were they of these
 heavenly messengers, and yet so loth to be convinced
 of their own error.

19 And there
 came thither cer-
 tain Jews from
 Antioch and Iconi-
 um, who persuaded
 the people, and ha-
 ving stoned Paul,
 they cast him out of
 the city, supposing
 him to be dead.

19 But when the unbelieving Jews, who had been
 so inveterate against the apostles at *Antioch* and *Iconi-
 um*, (ver. 2, 5. and chap. xiii. 45, 50.) heard what
 an interest they had, and what progress the gospel
 was like to make, among these *Gentiles*, they came
 with all haste from those cities thither, on purpose to
 incense the people, and raise the mob upon them, as
 ill-designing, turbulent, blasphemous, and seditious
 men: And they found means to give such a turn to
 their corrupt and sickle minds, that as the multitude
 formerly sang *Hosanna to the Son of David* one day,
 and within less than a week afterwards, under the in-
 fluence of the chief priests and rulers, cried out, *Cruci-
 fify him*; (Matth. xxi. 9. and xxvii. 22, 23.) so this
 people, who but a little before had adored the apostles,
 as gods, now, by the instigation of the Jews, who
 had the greatest spleen against *Paul*, stoned him in a
 riotous manner, as though he had been the worst of
 men; and then dragged him with barbarous indigni-
 ty out of the city, under an apprehension that they
 had certainly killed him *.

20 However,

N O T E.

The apostle evidently referred to *persecutions*, which came unto me at *Antioch*, at *Iconium*, at *Lysira*, what *persecutions*, (2 Cor. xi. 25.) Once was I *secutions* I endured; but out of them all, and to Timothy, thou hast fully all the Lord delivered me. (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.)

20 However, as the disciples stood round about him he rose up, and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; and saying that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed,

20 However, while the Christians, that had been converted in those parts, got about him, with tender and affectionate concern to mourn over him, and bury him, in case he were dead; or to perform the best offices of kindness and respect they were capable of toward him, as occasions might require; he, by the miraculous power and goodness of God, revived and, getting up, to their great surprise and joy, returned privately into the city: And, to escape the fury of his enemies, he went with Barnabas, on the morrow, from thence to Derbe, a neighbouring city in the same province.

21 And, wounded and bruised as his body was, he and Barnabas improved their time in preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of that city; and so effectual was the grace of God which accompanied them, that they, as instruments in his hand, made a considerable number of disciples, (*μαθηταὶ πολλοί*) who believed in Christ, yielded themselves up to his conduct and government, and professed his name: After this, the apostles proceeded no further in their journey, but returned back to water the good seed they had sown, at Lystra and Iconium, and at the Pisidian Antioch.

22 At all which places, they laid themselves out in establishing and settling (*καταστήσαντες*) the souls of the late converts, on the foundation of their most beloved faith; exciting them, by all manner of arguments taken from duty, gratitude and love, necessity and delight, the honour of Christ, and their own spiritual and eternal welfare, to abide by, and stedfastly persevere in the belief, profession, and practice of the great and glorious doctrines, which had been delivered to them, and which they had received by faith. And to fortify them against discouragement, on account of the late inhuman treatment Paul had met with, also to let them know the worst, as well as the best that might be expected, they told them, That from the holy appointment of God, the enmity of Satan and the world, to the purity, and spirituality of the gospel, and the present imperfect state of things, they must unavoidably pass through great trials and afflictions, persecutions and reproaches, into the heavenly kingdom, which God has prepared for them, that love him, and which will richly make amends for all the difficulties that lie in the way to it.

23 And when, to bring things into a proper order in the several churches, which had been gathered in all those towns or cities, the apostles, with a concurring approbation, choice, and vote of the churches

with fast-
they com-
ended them to
Lord, on whom
believed.

church, testified by the lifting up of hands, (*χειροτονία**) had publicly appointed some of the graver and elder, most judicious and experienced converts among them respectively, to the pastoral office, for stately labouring in the word and doctrine, and administering the gospel-seals of the covenant, and for presiding and watching over the particular flocks, of which the Holy Ghost, in this manner, made them overseers; (*chap. xi. 28.*) they, by a solemn prayer, attended with fasting, suitable to the great importance of this religious work, committed those pastors to the grace and care, guidance and blessing of the Lord Jesus, in whom they had believed, that they might be more and more furnished for, protected, assisted, and succeeded in, all their holy ministrations; and so set them apart to their respective charges.

And after
had passed
throughout Pisidia,
came to Pam-
phylia.

24 Then Paul and Barnabas, taking their leave of Antioch, and returning through the rest of Pisidia, came back again to Pamphylia, both which were provinces of the Lesser Asia.

And when
had preach-
the word in
they went
into Attalia.

25 And arriving at Perga in that country, where they had been before, (*chap. xiii. 13.*) they preached the gospel again to the people of that city, making a second trial of them, without any remarkable success in either of those attempts: After this they went down to Attalia, another city of Pamphylia, and a sea-port.

And thence
to Antioch,
whence they
been recom-
ended to the
of God, for
work which
fulfilled.

26 And from thence, going a ship-board, they sailed over the eastern part of the Mediterranean, which is called the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, (*chap. xxviii. 5.*) to the famous Antioch in Syria; from whence they first set out on this glorious expedition among the Gentiles, after they had been solemnly recommended in the church there, by fasting and prayer, to the grace and blessing of God for that service,

NOTE

It must indeed be allowed, that the *χειροτονία* is sometimes used by ancient writers, as signifying barely to appoint or constitute, whether by one or more; and yet it cannot be denied, but that its proper signification is *to lift up the hand*; and that, in this sense, it was commonly used by the ancients, to express their way of giving voice in public elections; and as the simple verb, as far as I find, is but once used in the New Testament, *viz.* *1 Cor. viii. 19.* it there evidently signifies the suffrage of the churches in their choice: And though it is used in *Acts x. 41.* to signify the appointment, being fore-chosen of God, (*προ-
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χειροτονία was *τεθεισ*) to be Christ's witnesses; the nature of the thing so plainly determines its particular meaning there, as puts it past danger of being mistaken. But when the choice of officers in churches is expressed by this word, one would think its original, grammatical, and most usual sense should be intended, as suitable to the rights of Christian societies; and it seems an exceeding strain upon the word, to suppose that it is here used in the same signification with *χειροτονία* to *lay on hands*. But the reader may consult for one side of the argument Dr. Hammond on the place; and for the other, Dr. Owen's true nature of a gospel-church, pag. 63, &c.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

service, (*chap. xiii. 1, 2.*) which they had now abundantly laboured in, and performed with wonderful success, in answer to those prayers.

27 And when, on their arrival again at that city, they had called the church together, they gave a distinct and particular account to them, from whom they had been sent by the special direction of the Holy Ghost, (*chap. xiii. 3, 4.*) of all their travels, labours, and sufferings, preservations, and encouragements; what God's ways had been with them; what amazing things he had wrought by their preaching and miracles for the propagation of the gospel, and conversion of multitudes among the *idolotrous* heathens, as well as *Jews* and proselytes; and how, in many places, the believers were established in Christ, formed into churches, and furnished with suitable pastors; and especially that God had, in this manner, opened a wide and effectual door, even to the work of the *Gentiles* themselves, to bring great numbers of them into a state of salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus.

28 And the apostles continued a considerable time with the Christians there to comfort them, and be comforted by them, and to help forward their further settlement, edification, and increase.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How plainly does the only living and true God testify his being and providence, patience and goodness, even to heathen nations, as he is the Creator of the heavens, the earth and sea, and of all things therein; as he bears with the perverse manners of those that abuse the light of their own consciences; and as he orders fruitful seasons, and gives them the necessities and the delights of life! But with how much brighter, and more endearing glory, does he make himself known, the testimonies he has given us by the word of revelation! He thereby calls us from all idolatries, and makes known the gospel of his grace, in and through his only Saviour of lost sinners; and so opens a door of faith to them. But how amazingly different is the reception that this blessed gospel meets with, where it comes! Some side with it, others set themselves against it; some are enraged at it, others believe it: And, alas! how fickle and inconstant are the thoughts of carnal, unrenewed men about it! At one time they take up a good opinion of it, and admire Christ's ministering servants as if they were gods; and soon afterwards they are turned against it, and exercise the most inhuman barbarities upon the preachers of it. But God's own testimony to his word, by its external and internal evidentials, bears down all opposition before it; and, by the attending power of the Spirit, wins over the worst of sinners to Christ: And when they are brought to believe in him, how do his infinite wisdom, love, and care, manifest themselves in his appointing them to be formed into churches, and furnished with pastors after his own heart, for their further edification and establishment! And O, with what pleasure and hope, labour and diligence, should his ministering servants set themselves out, not in seeking their own glory, or admitting of honours that belong to God only; but in the conversion of sinners, and confirmation of believers; and in all the services to which Christ calls them, notwithstanding the severest persecutions they may meet with for his sake! And yet sufferings, even his account, are not to be courted, or desired; but are to be carefully avoided, as far as may be with a good conscience, and that for the furtherance of the gospel.

C H A P. XV.

A dispute is raised at Antioch, by Judaizing teachers, about circumcising the Gentile converts; and Paul and Barnabas are sent by the church to Jerusalem for a decision of that point, 1,—5. The debates and conclusion of the council at Jerusalem, and their circular letter to the Gentile believers concerning it, 6,—29. Paul and Barnabas carry it to Antioch, where it is received with great joy, 30,—35. After which they propose a second joint apostolic journey; but fall into such a warm contention about John Mark, that they part, and take different routs, 36,—41.

TEXT.

AND certain men, which came down from Judaea, taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER Paul and Barnabas had made their report to the church at Antioch, how God had opened a door of faith, even to the idolatrous Gentiles, (chap. xiv. 27, 28.) some judaizing Christians, that came thither from Judea, and pretended to have authority from the apostles and church at Jerusalem, (ver. 24.) endeavoured to enslave the minds and consciences of the Gentile converts, who were brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, saying, Circumcision is of such absolute necessity, that unless ye submit to that divine ordinance, and so oblige yourselves to an observation of the whole law, according to Moses's constitution, (see the note on ver. 5.) all your faith in Christ will be utterly ineffectual to your salvation.

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

2 The two apostles therefore, being deeply concerned for the liberty and free course of the gospel, and for its great doctrine of justification, alone through faith in Christ, which such notions were subversive of, thought it their duty vigorously to oppose, and with holy zeal to dispute against these corrupters of Christianity: And when their debates with them rose so high, that all things seemed to be running into confusion, the Antiochian church, (ver. 3.) agreed to depute Paul and Barnabas*, and some other faithful brethren, that were members in communion with themselves, to such apostles and elders, (see the note

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on

NOTE

* This was the third time of Paul's coming to Jerusalem, which he refers to Gal. ii. 1, 2, 3. where he says, that it was fourteen years after his conversion, and that he then took Titus with him; and went by revelation, either to himself, whereby, as well as by the choice of the church at Antioch, he was directed to go thither, or by revelation to the

prophets of that church, who now again, by an immediate suggestion of the Holy Spirit, appointed these messengers, in concurrence with the whole church, as they at first had sent forth Paul and Barnabas to minister to the Gentiles, Chap. xiii. 2. See Dr. Whitty on Gal. ii. 1, 2.

on chap. xi. 30.) as might then be at Jerusalem and to the whole church there, (ver. 4.) to ask their judgment upon this important point, that it might be determined in the most unexceptionable manner by those very persons from whom the disturbers of the church's faith and peace pretended to come, and by the most eminent church of the circumcision, as all by such ministers, as all true believers owned to be inspired men.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed thro' Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

3 Hereupon a considerable number of the Antiochian church attended these deputies, part of the way, to bear their charges, and enjoy the pleasure of their company; and to testify their respect to them and approbation of the design of their journey, who travelled through the countries of Phenice and Samaria, publishing, as they went along, to the believers they met with what a glorious work God had wrought in the conversion (τῶν θύων) * of idolatrous

NOTE.

* What is here said about the apostles declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, seems to me to relate to the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles, which was spoken of at the close of the last chapter. (ver. 27.) For the conversion of the proselytes of the gate at Antioch, could not but be well known long ere this, as it had been about eight or nine years before, and had made a great noise in all those parts, and been carried as far as Jerusalem. This, among other things, restrains my full assent, which I would willingly have given, if I could, to the plausible and laboured attempt of the learned author of *Miscellanea Sacra*, essay iv. and of others after him, to prove that the following decree related only to the proselytes of the gate; for it can scarcely be thought, as he pleads, and seems with most assurance to depend upon, for the support of his hypothesis, that so surprising, important, and notorious a fact, as the conversion of the idolatrous heathens, which was not wrought in a corner, nor in one place only, but in the chief cities of several provinces, and made a great bustle there, and that all following instances of it could be so long concealed from the church at Jerusalem, as till about nine years after this decree, as he represents it: And we are expressly told, (ver. 4.) that when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, they declared all things that God had done with them, (ἀντιγγιλαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν) which is the very same expression that is used in chap. xiv. 27. when they declared at Antioch, how God had opened the door of faith to the idolatrous Gentiles. It is likewise said of the Gentiles, that they were turned to God (ver. 19.) which answers very nearly what is said of the Thessalonians, that they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; (1 Th. i. 9.) and an attempt to oblige them to be circumcised and keep the law, is called *subverting their souls*, (ver. 1.) which is of much the same import with what the apostle said to the Galatians who had been converted from heathenism, that if they were circumcised, it would profit them nothing, and would be of no effect to them. (Gal. v. 2.) And these I take to be the *residue men*, who, as the apostle James observed, (ver. 17.) it was prophesied should *seek after the Lord*, in distinction from proselytes of the gate, who seem to be described as those on whom *no name was called*. And in the Hebrew Amos ix. 12. the place here quoted, instead of the residue of men, it is the *remnant of Edom*; which was one of the nations that were notorious idolaters. Accordingly the council's recommendation of Paul and Barnabas, as men that had *warded their lives for the name of Lord Jesus Christ*, (ver. 26.) seems to refer to the account these apostles gave of their dangers and sufferings when they preached the gospel to idolatrous Gentiles, and were assailed and stoned for it at Iconium and Lystra (chap. xiv. 5, 19.) at the last of which places Paul was left for dead; and

as well as other *Gentiles*, from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. (Chap. xxvi. 18.) And as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; so the hearts of all the faithful brethren were warmed, and comforted at the hearing of such good news; and, instead of envying and murmuring, they exceedingly rejoiced in the grace of God, which had taken so wide a spread, and gave him the glory.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that

4 And when these messengers arrived at Jerusalem, they were readily and affectionately received, with great esteem, by the church, and by Peter, James, and John, who were the only apostles they found there, (Gal. ii. 9.) as also by the stated officers of that church: And Paul and Barnabas related, at large, first privately to the chief of them, (Gal. ii. 2.) and afterwards

NOTE

apostles in his next journey among the *Gentiles*, delivered this decree of the council to the churches in *Lystra* and *Derbe*, cities of *Lycaonia*, (chap. xvi. 1-4) where he and Barnabas had been before, and converted idolatrous *Gentiles*, and formed churches, partly at least of them, (chap. xiv. 22, 23.) which shews that they understood all sorts of *Gentiles* to be concerned in the design of this decree. But I own there is a considerable difficulty in reconciling all this with the apostle Paul's saying, (Gal. ii. 2.) that he communicated the gospel, which he preached among the *Gentiles*, privately to them which were of reputation; meaning, as is generally supposed, to the apostles James, Peter, and John: However, it is not said that he communicated it to them only; and the chief men, or men of reputation there mentioned, might probably include other eminent men, such as the superior prophets and elders that were there, as well as the apostles; and Paul might first privately acquaint these with his preaching among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, to take off their prejudices, and engage them to support and countenance him in the more public report he was to make of it, lest the most zealous and prejudiced part of the judaizing brethren, finding none to back him, should refuse to hear, or should rashly run down, what he had to say about it: So that this is no proof that he did not afterwards communicate it to the council at Jerusalem; and perhaps it is hinted that he did, in the former part of that verse, where the apostle, having spoke of the church there, says, he communicated that gospel to them; for they are the

antecedent to this relative. And whereas it has been said that the apostle James spoke of this decree, as the only thing that the church of Jerusalem had known, relating to the *Gentile* converts, till Paul, about nine years afterwards, declared to them what things God had wrought among the *Gentiles* by his ministry, (chap. xxi. 17, 25.) I should rather think that he spoke of it, as the only restraint that had been laid upon believers from among them, of what character soever they had been before: For he, or rather he and the elders, (ver. 18.) say nothing about the church's ignorance of any such conversion; and all that may be supposed to carry such an aspect, related as much to themselves as to the church: But they stood to it, that, according to that decree, believing *Gentiles* of all sorts were only obliged to abstain from the things therein mentioned. And it is indeed astonishing to me, that the conversion of the idolatrous *Gentiles* should be supposed to be so long a secret to the church at Jerusalem: Since the authors of this opinion themselves (though, as far as I find, they slip over the thought when they come to answer objections against their scheme) have placed the apostle Paul's epistles to the churches of *Galatia*, *Corinth*, *Thessalonica*; and *Rome*, before this time, which were *Gentile* churches, and consisted some, if not all of them, mostly of converts from heathen idolatry: Nor can I easily imagine, that, if this was privately communicated to the apostles at Jerusalem, they would have concealed it from the church there.

that God had done with them.

afterwards in a full assembly, (ver. 12.) all the great things which God had done by their means, not only at *Antioch*, but in other *Gentile* towns and cities where they had preached, (chap. xiv.) and what sufferings they had endured; and testimonies the Lord had given, in the gracious and miraculous way, to his acceptance of the heathen through faith in the great Redeemer.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

5 But here, as well as at *Antioch*, some *Jewish* Christians, who were converted from among the Pharisees, a sect that were most zealous for the rites of their law, vehemently opposed the two apostles and all that had shewn their approbation of the account they had given; these men warmly insisted upon it, That there was an absolute necessity for *Gentile* believers to be circumcised *, and thereby obliged to observe the whole law, given by *Moses*, in order to their admission into the church, and partaking of that salvation which was brought in by *Jesus Christ*.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

6 And as this was like to create further trouble and the point itself was of too great importance to be neglected, the apostles and elders, by joint agreement, (ver. 25.) assembled together without delay, not by themselves, but with the whole church, (ver. 4, 22.) to take it into serious consideration.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

7 And, after long and close debates on both sides of the question, the apostle *Peter*, to bring things to an issue, got up and spake to the whole assembly in the following manner, Ye men of *Israel*, and my dearly beloved brethren, ye all well know, and cannot but own, that some years ago, God was pleased to chuse me, from among the rest of us the apostles of the Lord *Jesus*, as was intimated by *Christ* himself, in the days of his flesh, (*Matth.* xvi. 19. see the Paraphrase there) and was afterwards more expressly revealed with regard to *Cornelius*; (*Acts* x.) all which was according to God's purpose, in the ancient days of eternity, (*αφ' αἰῶνος ἀρχαίων*) that the *Gentiles* should

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* This plainly shews that it was not barely circumcision, but a compliance with the whole law of *Moses*, which circumcision obliged to; that the Judaizing Christians aimed at, as necessary to salvation: And it was under this notion of it, that they were so zealous to impose it, and the apostle *Paul* was so zealous in setting himself against it, as a most dangerous error, subversive of the truth of the gospel, and of God's way of justifying, alone through faith in *Christ*, without the deeds of the law: Accord-

ingly he represents it in this light, saying, (*Gal.* v. 2, 3, 4.) If ye be circumcised *Christ* shall profit you nothing: For testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. *Christ* is become of none effect to you; whosoever of you are seeking to be justified by the law, ye are fallen from the doctrine of grace. And this I take to be the key to what he means, whenever he inveighs against circumcision, as inconsistent with a state of pardon, and acceptance to eternal life.

should have the gospel preached to them first of all, by my ministrations; and that, by the power of his grace attending his own word and appointment, they should be brought to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life, which was but the first fruits and earnest of his further calling others from among them.

1 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

8 And God, who is perfectly acquainted with the inmost dispositions of the heart, and with the thorough change which his own work had made in theirs, clearly testified his acceptance of them, not only by giving them the graces and joys of his Spirit, whereby they magnified his name, but also by a visible effusion of the Holy Ghost, in an immediate and miraculous way upon them, (*chap. x. 44, 45, 46.*) just after the same manner as he openly bore witness of his accepting us his first *Jewish* disciples, on the famous day of *Pentecost*. (*Chap. ii.*)

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

9 And this was an evident demonstration, that he as readily received them, as he did us *Jews*, to his special favour, without making the least difference in this respect, between us and them, though they were not circumcised, and thereby obliged to keep the whole law of *Moses*; he having made them clean, without any of these external rites, in that he cleansed their souls from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin, through faith in his Son, by whose blood and Spirit they are justified and sanctified.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

10 Since therefore God has so plainly declared himself in their favour, how durst any of you disbelieve it, or quarrel at it, or arraign his infinite wisdom and authority in it; or go about to prescribe to him, and try whether he will retract what he has done? And why should ye attempt to put a yoke of bondage upon *Gentile* believers and their seed, by obliging them to be circumcised, who, under the gospel-state, are to be considered as disciples of Christ, in like manner as children were reckoned with their parents, to belong to the church of *Israel*, under the *Mosaic* economy? How perverse is it to insist, in defiance of this new dispensation of God's grace toward them, that they should be subjected to circumcision, and thereby to all the legal institutions, which are so numerous and costly, painful and difficult; and so entangling to conscience, and incapable of satisfying it, or of taking away sin, that neither our holy ancestors, nor we ourselves, could tell how to bear them, without the greatest inebriation and anxiety of mind; nor should ever have willingly submitted to them, unless he had commanded it?

11 But we be-
lieve that, through
the

11 But there is evidently now no need of this, since, though those *Gentiles* were uncircumcised, we are

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

are firmly persuaded, considering the great things which God himself has freely done for them, that it is by the mere grace and favour of Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Saviour of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and by the favour of God through him, that we and they *, as well as our fathers, believe unto, (*πιστεύουσιν*) and are made partakers of salvation, without any respect to the one or the other's being circumcised, or not; for in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love. (Gal. v. 6.)

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the *Gentiles* by them.

12 When Peter had finished this pertinent and moving discourse, there was a profound silence in the whole church, to hear what might be further offered upon the argument before them; whereupon Paul and Barnabas standing up to speak, they attentively listened to them, who gave a distinct account of the various steps they had taken in their late journey, not only with the *Jews* and proselytes of the gate, but likewise with the *idolatrous Gentiles*, and of what wonderful miracles God had wrought by their means to confirm the gospel, which they had preached to the last of these as well as the others, and to testify his acceptance of them, according to what had been already related at large. (Chap. xiv.)

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.

13 And when they had gone through their narrative, and made proper reflections upon it, the apostle James, the son of Alphaeus, (see the note on Matth. x. 3.) summed up the debate in the following pacific and judicious manner, saying, Ye men of Israel, and my dear brethren in the Lord, let me beg your patience, and your favourable attention to my sentiments on this important point.

14 Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the *Gentiles*, to take out of them a people for his name.

14 Our worthy brother, Simon Peter, has just now informed us, how God at first began his great and good work of graciously visiting the *Gentiles*, by making him the happy instrument of conveying the light of salvation to them, which ye hear has been carried on still further in a glorious manner, and with divine attestations, by the ministry of our beloved brethren, Barnabas and Paul; to the conversion of multitudes of heathen idolaters, as well as proselytes of the gate, to separate a peculiar people from among all sorts of *Gentiles* to himself, in a way of sovereign mercy.

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* It seems most directly suitable to the apostle's design to refer these words, even as they, to the *Gentiles*, rather than to the fathers; and yet as both admit of a good sense, and the last may not be entirely foreign to the apostle's argument

against imposing the law of Moses upon the *Gentiles*, since the fathers were saved, not by the law, but merely by the grace of Christ, through faith in him who was to come, I have likewise taken that into the Paraphrase.

mercy, to the praise of the glory of his grace, that they might profess and call upon his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

15, 16 And if we compare facts with former prophecies of these days, we shall find that all this is perfectly agreeable to, and an exact accomplishment of, ancient predictions of inspired men, according to what is recorded in many of their writings, and particularly in *Amos ix. 11.* where, after God had promised that he would not utterly destroy the house of *Jacob*, but would separate the corn from the chaff, wherever they are scattered among all nations, that not a grain of it might be lost, *ver. 8, 9.* he says, I will return in the greatness of my mercy to them, and will rebuild the house of *David*, which, by its own iniquities, and the oppression of its enemies, is like a tabernacle fallen into contempt, and brought to desolation; and I will raise it again out of its ruins, and exalt it to higher glory than ever, by the coming of the Messiah, who shall spring out of that decayed family, and by setting up a spiritual and everlasting kingdom under him, with wide extent, of whom, and of whose church, *David* and his house were types;

17 That not the *Jews* only, but likewise men of other nations, who have hitherto been left and neglected of God, (see the note on *ver. 3.*) may inquire after him, and the way of finding favour with him; and so may seek and serve the Lord their God and *David* their King, as was prophesied of both these sorts of people; (*Hos. iii. 5.* and *Jer. xxx. 9.*) and that particularly all the devout *Gentiles*, who, as religious proselytes, profess and call upon my name, and shall be converted to the faith of the Messiah, may lead the way herein, saith the Lord *Jehovah*, who performs all these great and marvellous works, to unite *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one church under Christ, their Head.

18 This, my brethren, plainly shews, that as God has, and ever had, a comprehensive, distinct, and unerring view and fore-knowledge of all his works, from the beginning of the world, and before the foundation of it; so his calling the *Gentiles* now, in accomplishment of prophecies, that were delivered many ages ago, was foreseen and predetermined from all eternity by him, and is brought to pass by his gracious and effectual operation, according to his purpose, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. (*Eph. i. 11.*)

19 My opinion and advice therefore, upon the whole, is, that we should take heed of burdening and distressing the consciences, and disturbing the peace

19 Wherefore
Sentence is,
that

that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

of those among the *Gentiles*, or of loading them with a yoke of bondage, who are turned to God from their iniquities, and even from heathenish idols, to serve the living and true God, (1 *Thef.* i. 9.) by obliging, so much as desiring them to be circumcised, and bound to observe the whole *Jewish* law.

20 But as the civil polity of the commonwealth of *Israel* still, in measure, subsists; and as the utmost care should be taken to keep the converted *Gentiles* at the greatest distance from every thing that looks like favouring the idolatrous worship which they have renounced, and to prevent their giving offence to the believing *Jews*; it may be very necessary, for uniting both parties into one civil society, and one Christian church, in the present circumstances of things, that we write a letter to our *Gentile* brethren, to recommend their abstaining from such things as the proselytes of the gate have hitherto been obliged to, by the law of *Moses*, in order to their enjoying civil and religious privileges among the *Jews*; as particularly That they abstain from eating or drinking any thing that is offered or devoted to idols; and from all impure embraces, that are condemned by *Moses's* law, and have been used in the heathen temples before the gods; as also from eating the flesh of such beasts, or fowls, as were strangled to prevent the separation of the blood from their flesh*; and from eating or drink-

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* The author of *Miscellanea Sacra*, (see *essay* iv.) has, I think, made it out, with a good deal of evidence, in concurrence with Dr. *Spencer*, that things strangled, are to be distinguished from things that were torn, or died of themselves, and that all the particulars of the prohibitions mentioned here, and in the following decree, (ver. 29.) were laid upon the believing *Gentiles*, because they had been forbidden by the law of *Moses*, (*Lev.* xvii. and xviii. 1.—26.) to the proselytes of the gate, on account of their having been the chief inducements to, and concomitants or symptoms of idolatry, in order to their enjoying the civil and religious privileges that were allowed to them among the *Jews*. But this does not, in my opinion, necessarily infer, as that learned author contends, that the following decree related only to proselytes of the gate: (see the note on ver. 3.) For, upon the conversion of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, why might not they be admitted to all these privileges, upon the same terms with the proselytes of the gate, since they re-

nounced idolatry as much as these? And this makes the decree to be only temporary, with respect to those things that are merely related to the *Jewish* constitution, as much as if we were to confine to the proselytes of the gate; and consequently none of these particulars, except fornication, which is often expressly forbidden in the New Testament, as in this case, can be any longer obligatory upon us, who have no concern with the national constitution of the *Jews*, either as to church or state, which is now utterly destroyed. As to the eating of blood, Mr. *Shuckford* has, as I apprehend, justly observed, that the principal reason for the prohibition of eating it was, because God appointed the blood of beasts to make atonement for the soul of man (*Lev.* xvii. 10, 11.) and therefore required, that it should be religiously set apart for that purpose: But if this were a moral thing, God would not have permitted the *Israelites* to give, or sell, a creature that died of itself, and so its blood, to a stranger, that he might eat it. (*Deut.* xiv. 21.) And there-

ing the blood itself, that has been taken from any animal: For as fornication is in itself sinful, so abstaining from the other things, as well as that, is needful to prevent offence to the Christian *Jews*, and secure a quiet enjoyment of privileges to the converted *Gentiles*; and so to promote mutual love and communion between both.

21 For the law of *Moses*, which forbids these things even to the proselytes of the gate, is still, according to ancient custom, explained in every city where there are religious assemblies of *Jews*; his writings being constantly read in their synagogues, at their times of public worship, every Sabbath-day: And therefore as they have been brought up, all their lives long, in a reverence of this law, and will still frequently hear it read, they will be exceedingly offended to find, that the things there expressly prohibited, should nevertheless be practised by the uncircumcised *Gentile* converts, who, by the gospel, are brought into the same church and communion with themselves, and who, upon abstaining from these things, will have as good a claim to civil privileges, that are allowed by the law to strangers of the gate, as if they had been all devout *Gentiles* before.

22 This proposal, which was made, not in a way of authoritative imposition, but of candid advice, appeared so very fit and reasonable to the rest of the apostles, *Peter* and *John*, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as also to the elders then present, and to the whole church, that they all united in chusing certain persons from among themselves, to go to *Antioch*, together with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and carry their answer to the question which had been sent from the church there: (ver. 2.) And that they might in the best manner testify their respect to them, and their readiness to keep up brotherly communion with them, and might add the greater weight to their message, the men they pitched upon to accompany these two apostles, were *Judas*, whose surname was *Barsabas*; and *Silas*, who was likewise called *Silvanus* *, (2 Cor. i. 19.) both

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though the apostles, at the council of *Jerusalem*, that offence might not be given to the *Jews*, advised the *Gentiles*, at that season, to abstain from yet the eating it, or not eating it, is part of our religion, but we are at liberty in this matter. See *Shuckard*, Vol. I. part i. book ii. pag. 94.—97. as to things offered to idols, the apostle *Paul* afterwards speaks of eating them, not as absolutely unlawful in it-

self; but only so far as it might countenance idolatry, and give offence to weak and tender consciences; (*Rom.* xiv. 14, 15, 17. *1 Cor.* viii. 7.—10. and x. 23.—31.) And this agrees with our Lord's own determination about moral desilement. *Mark.* vii. 15.—23.

* As *Judas*'s surname is the same with that of *Joseph*, who was called *Barsabas*, and was a candidate for the apostleship, (*chap.* i. 23.) some have thought that they

of which were noted, eminent and leading men among the brethren of the church at *Jerusalem*,

23 And wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles, and elders, and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such

23 And that the *Antiochian* brethren, and other *Gentile* churches might be fully satisfied that what these messengers had in commission to report to them was the true and unanimous sense of the whole assembly, they wrote a letter, and sent it by them*, exactly answerable to the apostle *James's* advice, the contents of which were to this effect †: The apostles and elders, and brethren at *Jerusalem*, send the Christian salutations in the Lord, wishing all prosperity, peace, and joy unto the *Gentile* brethren of the churches that commonly reside and assemble at *Antioch*, and in other parts of the provinces of *Syria* and *Cilicia* ‡, or wherever they are scattered abroad.

24 Inasmuch as, to our extreme grief, we have been informed, that some persons, who went from these parts, and, pretending to be countenanced and authorised by us, have given you a great deal of disturbance, by their deceiving words and fierce dissuasions, even to the perverting of your souls, in the great article of justification alone through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and turning them aside from the liberty of the gospel, by insisting on the necessity of your being circumcised, and submitting to the whole

NOTES.

they were brethren. *Silas* was the *Jewish* name of the other of these messengers, and it seems from his being called a *Roman*, (chap. xvi. 37.) that he was a free-man of *Rome*, and that *Silvanus* was his *Roman* name, by which he was usually called, after he became the companion of the apostle *Paul*, in preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*.

* The whole conduct of this affair plainly shews, that the church in those days had no notion of *Peter's* primacy, or of his being the chief judge of controversies: For the decree is drawn up, not according to *his*, but the apostle *James's* proposal and direction about the point in dispute; and that in the name, not of the apostle *Peter*, but of all the apostles and elders then present, and of the whole church, to whom the message was sent. Nay, *Peter's* name is not so much as mentioned at all, either in the order for sending to *Jerusalem*, (ver. 2.) upon the question, or in the messengers address relating to it, (ver. 4.) or in the letter that was wrote in answer to it: And this likewise shews that the seat of judgment was then placed in the whole church, as well as in its officers, or together with them; and that even extra-

ordinary officers themselves would not take upon them to determine this important point, without the concurrence of the brethren; and that their determination was according to the word of God, (ver. 15, &c.) the only rule of faith, and infallible judge of controversies. How unlike was all this to the proceedings of Popes, and famous councils, in after ages!

† I take the following words, to the end of ver. 29. to be an exact copy of the council's letter; but as the nature of a paraphrase requires the use of different terms, to explain and enlarge upon the text, it is necessary to say, in representing its sense, that it was to this effect, or to this purpose, or the like.

‡ That this decree related to other churches of the *Gentiles*, besides those of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, appears from the apostle *Paul's* delivering it to the churches of the several towns and cities in other provinces to which he afterwards went (chap. xvi. 4.) and where he had before preached the gospel, and been owned of God in the conversion of many thousands, as well as devout *Gentiles*. (See the note on ver. 3.)

command-
ment:

25 It seemed
good unto us, be-
ing assembled with
one accord, to send
chosen men unto
you, with our be-
loved Barnabas and
Paul;

26 Men that
have hazarded
their lives for the
name of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent
therefore Judas and
Silas, who shall
tell you the
same things by
word of mouth.

28 For it seemed
good to the Holy
Ghost, and to us,
to lay upon you
no greater burden
than these neces-
sary things;

law of *Moses*, in order to your acceptance with God, and being admitted to all the privileges and blessings of his covenant, we in reality never said a word to those men, or to any others, that looked like a commission from us, to suggest any thing of that kind.

25 We therefore being met together with one mind and heart, in one and the same spirit, and having maturely deliberated upon the matter, have thought it highly expedient, and accordingly have unanimously agreed, to send to you, with this our letter, men of unexceptionable character, chosen out of the church, which ordinarily assembles here; and have sent, together with them, the two apostles, *Barnabas* and *Paul*, who are deservedly exceeding dear to us, as well as to yourselves, for their eminent gifts and graces, labours and sufferings;

26 Men, who have given the strongest proofs of their sincerity and zeal, in that they have freely exposed themselves to the utmost hardships, and run the risk of their own lives, by preaching the gospel, in obedience to the authority, and for promoting the glory of *Jesus Christ*, their Lord and ours. But lest the false teachers should make ill impressions on some minds, as if, because these apostles have been chief instruments in converting the *Gentiles*, they are so prepossessed in their favour, as to misrepresent our sense about them.

27 We have therefore, to take off all suspicion of that nature, deputed *Judas* and *Silas* to attend them, in bringing this letter to you, who will likewise more fully satisfy you, by word of mouth, about our sentiments, proceedings, and determination in this affair, according to what we have here written.

28 For, to come to the main point, it has pleased the Holy Ghost, as appears by the intimations he has given in ancient prophecies of the calling of the *Gentiles*, and by his extraordinary descent on *Cornelius* and his friends at *Cæsarea*, (chap. x. 44, &c.) and afterwards on the idolatrous *Gentiles*, (see the note on chap. xiii. 52.) though neither of them were circumcised; and it has accordingly been judged fit and proper by us, under his direction and influence, to injoin your observation of nothing further, that might be looked upon as of a burdensome nature, than the few following things, which, considering all circumstances in the present state of the *Jewish* constitution, and of the gospel-church, are necessary * to set you upon good terms with your believing

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* Though all these particulars were at that time necessary for avoiding offence,

believing brethren of the circumcision; and they are,

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

29 That ye refrain from meats and drinks offered to idols, as partaking of them would be construed a countenancing of the idol itself, in opposition to the only true God; that ye forbear eating or drinking of blood, that has been taken from any animal; and from eating the flesh of any fowl or beast that has been strangled to prevent the taking away its blood, as feeding upon either of these would be deemed symbolizing with idolatry, and would give such offence, as to prevent all free correspondence and brotherly communion with Christian *Jews*; and that ye never defile yourselves with any kind of unlawful use of women, as that is not only abominable, on account of the impurities of that kind which have been practised before the heathen idols in their temples, but is likewise destructive of God's ordinance of marriage, and of the peace, harmony, and welfare of families, and is directly contrary to the express command of our Saviour. (*Matth.* xix. 3,—9.) If ye carefully avoid these four things, ye will do all that is needful, on your part, to take off exceptions against you, merely because ye are not circumcised, and do not think yourselves bound by the *Mosaic* law; and ye will commendably pursue the things that make for the glory of God, the tranquillity and comfort of the church, and the furtherance of the gospel. We add no more, than our hearty prayers, that your souls may abundantly prosper in light and grace, holiness, love and peace, and may be saved for ever.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and, when they had gathered the

30, 31 Then *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and the other messengers that attended them, being in this manner sent away, proceeded, in pursuance of their orders, directly to *Antioch* in *Syria*, from whence the question had been sent, relating to the necessity of the believing

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fence, and promoting civil and sacred harmony, love, and peace, as things were then circumstanced between the believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who were to be incorporated into one church; they were not said to be *absolutely* or *alike* necessary in themselves: And therefore it cannot be concluded from thence, that eating of blood, as well as fornication, is in its own nature sinful; or that abstaining from the first of these is at all necessary, now the reasons of the prohibition are ceased; though avoiding fornication will always be so, as long as God's ordinance for marriage, the laws of society, and the New Testament-dispensation

last. For if these things were necessary at all, on any account whatsoever, and particularly with relation to the case which occasioned the writing of this letter; that is enough to answer the force of the expression, which calls them, in this view, *necessary things*. See *Leland's Div. Author. of the Old and New Testaments*, Vol. I. p. 415,—419. And as it is certain that many other things, besides these, were necessary to the Christian character, it appears that, when these only were spoken of as *necessary things*, it relates not to Christians as such, but merely to the then present state of the church,

the multitude together, they delivered the epistle.

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

believing *Gentiles* being circumcised. And there, calling the church together, they delivered to them the letter from the apostles, elders, and brethren at *Jerusalem*. Which being read to the whole assembly, by their own order, they exceedingly rejoiced in the comfort of such a seasonable and amicable settlement of the late troublesome controversy, and in the friendly exhortation (*επι τα παρακαλου*) that was given them to comply with these injunctions; which were indeed no other than the proselytes of the gate had always been under; and to stand fast in their Christian liberty from the yoke of bondage, which their enemies would have laid upon them.

32 Hereupon *Judas* and *Silas*, who were themselves superior prophets, joined with the apostles, and took abundance of pains, in persuading and entreating the Christian brethren, by many arguments, to practise according to this excellent plan for peace; and to persevere in the pure doctrines of Christ, and in a close adherence to him for justification in God's sight: And by this means they greatly strengthened and settled them in the faith, holiness, and liberty of the gospel.

33 And when they had spent a considerable time in this useful manner at *Antioch*, their good services were thankfully owned by the church there, who being at peace among themselves, and wishing all blessings to them, agreed to give them all proper assistances and testimonies of respect, in their journey, whenever they should please to return to such of the apostles as might be still at *Jerusalem*, who would be glad to hear of the happy effects of the epistle and deputation which had been sent from thence.

34 But *Silas* rather chose to let *Judas* go back alone, and to continue himself still a while longer with the brethren at this city, that he might be of further use to them; and might have the pleasure and advantage of their Christian conversation, and of seeing how the work of the Lord went forwards among them.

35 *Paul* and *Barnabas* likewise tarried at *Antioch* for some time after this, laying themselves out with great zeal and assiduity, in private discourses, and public preaching on the great doctrines of Christ, for the conversion of sinners, as many people used to come from all parts to that great metropolis; and for the increase and edification of the church; and there were several other men of eminent gifts and graces, that were assistant to them therein.

36 But

NOTE.

It appears pretty plain from *Gal. ii. 11, &c.* that *Peter* came down from *Jerusalem*.

36 And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

36 But after the two apostles had stayed there as long as they thought convenient, Paul said to Barnabas, his fellow-labourer, Come, let us now return and make a joint visit to our dear brethren that have been brought over to the faith of Christ, and formed into churches, (*chap. xiv. 23.*) in all the towns and cities where we have been preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus, which he committed to our trust, and which derives all its efficacy from him, who is its author, subject, and glory; that we ourselves may see how it fares with them; whether they continue and go forwards in the faith and order of the gospel, or decline and go backwards; whether they have rest and peace, or are involved in troubles and dangers, and what further assistances may be needful for them, or further work is to be done among them.

37 And Barnabas, approving of this good motion, was desirous to take his nephew John Mark along with them in their second progress; he having still an affection for him, as his near kinsman after the flesh, and brother in Christ, though he had deserted them in their former journey. (*Chap. xiii. 13.*)

38 But Paul did not think him worthy of the honour; and therefore would by no means agree to take him for their assistant again, who, under the influence of some worldly and carnal motive, had left their company at Perga in Pamphylia; and declined venturing any farther with them in the noble, though perilous enterprize to which the Holy Spirit had called them; (*chap. xiii. 2.*) and so left them to go on alone in that important service.

39 And as the best of men are but men at the best, and have remainders of weakness and corruption in them, for their humbling and caution, and to keep them self-diffident and dependent on the merit and grace of the Redeemer; each of these eminent saints and servants of Christ was so stiff, and unyielding to the other on this head, that neither of them would make such allowances to his brother, as humility, love, and meekness called for; but they fell into such warm disputes, as too much inflamed each other's passions, and issued in their parting company. And yet as their hearts were invariably set on the main design, and God knows how to over-rule the intemperate heats and quarrels of his own people,

NOTE

Jerusalem to Antioch, before Paul and Barnabas had left it; and that this was the time when the contention happened between him and the apostle Paul, at

Antioch, about eating with the Gentiles: For this seems to be the only time when Paul saw these two apostles of the Gentiles at Antioch.

well as the cruel persecutions of their enemies, for the furtherance of the gospel; *Barnabas*, who would not give up *Mark*, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure; (*Hof. viii. 8.*) went away with him, and set sail for his native country, the isle of *Cyprus*, (*chap. iv. 36.*) to visit the brethren, and to help their faith and joy there, where the two apostles of the *Gentiles* had begun their work in their first journey. (*Chap. xiii. 4.*)

40 And Paul and Silas, and deacons, being recommended by the brethren unto the face of God.

40 And *Paul*, who was afterwards reconciled to *Barnabas* and *Mark*, and spoke honourably and affectionately of them, (*1 Cor. ix. 6. Col. iv. 10. and 2 Tim. iv. 11.*) chose *Silas* for his assistant, instead of *Mark*; and though there might be some fault in both the apostles way of managing their hot contests about him, yet the church seeming to think *Paul* most in the right, and approving of his choice of *Silas**, he set out with him upon the wings of their prayers, who solemnly recommended him to the favour and blessing of God, for all assistance and success in this his second apostolic journey; which, together with what was afterwards done by him, will be the principal subject of the remaining part of this history.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

41 And he travelled, first of all, through part of *Syria*, till he came to *Cilicia*, which was his own country, (*chap. xxi. 39.*) in both of which provinces he visited the churches that had been planted in their several cities†; and, leaving with them the articles agreed on by the council at *Jerusalem*, and directed to them, (*ver. 23.*) he chiefly applied himself to the good work of establishing them in the faith and fellowship of the gospel.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How injurious is a spirit of bigotry for the law of *Moses* to the pure doctrine of salvation alone by Jesus Christ, through faith in him! But how happy is it to be freed from a law, the observation of which was like a galling yoke of bondage to the

NOTES.

* It seems as if *Barnabas* went away abruptly, without waiting for the prayers of the church, which he might think less necessary, because he had been before sent out, and recommended by them in the grace of God, together with the apostle *Paul*, for preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*. (*Chap. xiii. 3.*) Or, perhaps, he had their prayers now again, where he set out, as well as *Paul*, though *Luke* passed it over in silence, as assigning to give no further account of them; but to proceed immediately to the history of the other great apostle of the *Gentiles* after this separation.

† There is no reason to doubt but

that, as this decree was directed to these churches, as well as to that at *Antioch*, *Paul* and *Silas* left it with them; and therefore some have thought that this verse is to be connected with *chap. xvi. 4.* and that the three first verses of that chapter are to be considered as a parenthesis. But there is no necessity for this supposition, which seems to be made to serve an hypothesis; for that fact might be taken for granted, and therefore needed not to be particularly mentioned; because it had just before been said, that the decree was expressly addressed to the churches of these provinces, *ver. 23.* of this chapter.

the flesh and conscience, and never could procure the benefit which the gospel brings to those whose hearts are purified by faith! They are saved not by works of their own, but merely by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, how innumerable forever their characters were before? When attempts are made, and that under pretence of apostolical authority, to corrupt the distinguishing peculiarities of the gospel, and to pervert the souls of Christ's disciples; it is high time to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints: But what pity is it, and what a humbling proof of the remainder of corruption in the best of men upon earth, that angry contentions should ever arise among such as are heartily agreed in the same common cause, about matters of little moment, and about the prudential rules and methods of carrying on the work of the Lord! And to what confusion, trouble, and danger, do warm controversies expose the churches of Christ! It is matter of great consolation when they are happily adjusted; and the wisdom of God is to be adored, which over-rules them, for the clearing up of truth, and the establishment of believers, as it did the issue of the disputations between the apostles and the false teachers; and for propagating the cause of Christ, as the contention between *Barnabas* and *Paul* turned to the wider spread of the gospel. But it is the duty of the churches themselves, as well as of their pastors and teachers, to interpose for the settling of such controversies, as affect their peace, harmony, and communion one with another; and yet this is by no means to be attempted by a way of arbitrary imposition, but of prudent, brotherly advice, which they should be ready to ask, receive, and give, with a deep concern for important doctrine, and Christian liberty on one hand, and for tenderness and condescension to weak and scrupulous consciences on the other; and none should ever go into a way of authoritative determination, any farther than they can make it appear that the Holy Ghost has decided the point which lies before them. And how careful should we be, that we do not misconstrue God's own injunctions, and make use of them perpetually binding upon conscience, which he designed only to suit for temporary occasions; and that we do not confound things necessary in themselves, like that of flying from the sin of fornication, with things that are so only in some peculiar circumstances, like those of abstaining from meats and drinks offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from blood!—When any are brought to the true faith of Christ, it is matter of great joy to all serious Christians that hear of it: but the ministry of the gospel is as needful for confirming and establishing them that believe, as for the conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways: And whatever success his servants have, in either of these parts of their work, it is only what God has done by them, and they should speak of it in that manner, that he may have all the glory.

C H A P. XVI.

Paul, finding Timothy at Lystra, circumcises him, and takes him to be his assistant, 1,—3. Visits several churches, 4, 5. Is prevented going to some places, and directed to Macedonia, by the Spirit, 6,—12. Lydia is converted by his ministry near Philippi, 13,—15. He afterwards casts out a spirit of divination from a young woman there, 16,—18. For this he and Silas are scourged and imprisoned, 19,—24. The jailor is converted, 25,—34. And Paul and Silas are publicly and honourably set at liberty by the magistrates, 35,—40.

TEXT.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named *Timotheus*, the

PARAPHRASE.

THE apostle *Paul*, leaving *Cilicia*, went in company with *Silas* to *Derbe* and *Lystra*, cities of *Lycaonia*; where he and *Barnabas* had preached and planted churches before. (*Chap. xiv. 6, 20,—25.*) And observe how happily God supplied his want

the son of a certain
man which was
Jewish, and be-
lieved; but his fa-
ther was a Greek:

John Mark, by providing him another most agree-
able assistant in his stead. At the last of these ci-
ties, he met with a certain disciple of Jesus, *Timothy*
by name, the son of the noted *Eunice*, who was a
Jewess; and a sincere believer in Christ; (*2 Tim. i.*
5.) but his father was a *Gentile* of *Grecian* extract;
and so he was the properest person that could be met
with, to engage in ministrations both to *Jews* and
Gentiles.

Which was
reported of
the brethren
were at *Lys-*
and *Iconium*.

2 This young man had an excellent character for
his religion, morals, and superior gifts and graces,
among all the Christian brethren, that were acquaint-
ed with him at *Lysra*, and the neighbouring city of
Iconium; and some of the inspired prophets, in those
days, had foretold his future eminent services in the
church of Christ. (*1 Tim. i. 18.* and *iv. 14.*)

Him would
have to go
with him;
look and cir-
cumcised him, be-
cause of the Jews
which were in
quarters: for
knew all that
father was a
Gentile.

3 *Paul* therefore was desirous to take this extra-
ordinary youth to travel with him, and to be assistant
to him in his work: And though this apostle had
lately appeared with great zeal against imposing cir-
cumcision on *Gentile* converts, either as necessary to
salvation, or as a religious bond to observe the cere-
monial law; (*chap. xv. 1, 2.*) and had opposed the
circumcising of *Titus*, both his parents being *Genti-*
les, who were under no manner of obligation to re-
gard the *Mosaic* constitution: (*Gal. ii. 3.*) Yet as
the *Jewish* ceremonies were national rites, which be-
longed to their civil, as well as ecclesiastical state,
and were to be gradually laid aside among them, till
their civil constitution should be utterly destroyed;
and as he was willing, as far as he could with a safe
conscience, to become a *Jew* to the *Jews*, and to
be made all things to all men, that he might gain o-
ver the more to Christ and the gospel, for his glory
and their own salvation: (*1 Cor. ix. 19;—23.*) So,
in condescension to *Jewish* prejudices, and in com-
pliance with their civil polity, he, with *Timothy's*
own consent, circumcised him, because he was a *Jew*
by his mother's side, and there were a great many of
that countrymen in those parts, who were zealous for
their ancient rites, and would make his want of cir-
cumcision a strong objection against his ministry,
and against conversing with him, and so obstruct his
usefulness among them*; for they all knew that his

C c 2

father

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Circumcision, and all the rites of
ceremonial law, were, *de jure*, in
disfavour of God, and in the nature of
things abolished by the death of Christ;
yet it pleased God, in his infinite
wisdom, and gracious condescension to

the infirmities and prepossessions of the
Jewish converts, to defer the revelation
of this doctrine for many years, and then
to spread the knowledge of it among
them in a very slow and gradual man-
ner, as they were able to bear it; lest

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

father was a *Gentile*, and had not allowed him to be circumcised in his infancy.

4 But (3.) that this might not be made a precedent against Christian liberty, as *Paul* and his company passed through the various cities, where *Gentile* churches were already planted, they left with them copies of all the articles of the resolutions, (Acts xv. 22, &c.) which had been agreed upon by the apostles and elders, together with the whole church at Jerusalem, to be observed by *Gentile* converts, who were thereby discharged from all obligations to be circumcised; (*chap. xv. 22, &c.*) exhorting them, at the same time, to continue in the faith, and to study of things that make for love and peace, by a compliance with that plan, as long as the necessity of affairs might require it.

5 And this proved such a satisfactory and uniting scheme, that the churches were thereby confirmed and settled in the great doctrines of faith, with respect to their Christian liberty, and their dependence

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an earlier and more open discovery of it, all at once, should be too shocking to them, who were so fond of those ordinances which he himself had formerly instituted, and which they could not easily, on a sudden, be brought to believe were repealed: And therefore they were left, for the present, as indifferent things to be observed by *Jewish* believers, or not, as might be most unto edification, till the whole frame of that constitution should be demolished in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, when they, in fact, would mostly cease of course. In the mean while, the apostle speaking of such sort of things, referred them to the judgment of the Christian's own mind, provided it were without offence to his brethren, (*Rom. xiv. 5, 14, 23.*) and said, as to himself, that all things were lawful to him, but all things were not expedient, nor would he be brought under the power of any; (*1 Cor. vi. 12. and x. 23.*) and particularly insisted, that in *Christ Jesus*, neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and faith which works by love: (*Gal. v. 6. and vi. 15.*) Accordingly no notice is taken in the decree of the council about what the *Jewish* Christians should do, relating to circumcision, and keeping the law of *Moses*; but only about what might be proper for those of the *Gentiles*: For the apostles, elders, and church at Jerusalem, seemed to have no notion as yet, nor for many years after-

wards, of the abolition of the law, among *Jewish* converts; and therefore, especially considering that circumcision must be regarded in a civil view relating to the state, as well as in a religious view relating to the church of Israel, the apostle *Paul* saw fit, for reasons expressed in the Paraphrase, that *Timothy*, who was a *Jew* by his mother's side, should be circumcised. And for like reasons afterwards took upon himself a vow of *Nazaritism*, and consented to put himself, and be at charges with others that had done the same: (*Acts xviii. and xxi. 23,—26.*) And though he estimated the abolition of the ceremonial law in some of his epistles to *Gentile* churches, as particularly in *Gal. iii. 10. and Col. ii. 16,—23.*; yet, as he knew that the prejudices of the *Jewish* converts were too strong to bear with the sort of doctrine, it does not appear he ever delivered it in his preaching in any of his writings to the *Jews*, except in the epistle to the *Hebrews*, which I take to be his, and to have been wrote toward the close of his life. Hence when they first heard as if he taught *Jews*, that were among the *Gentiles*, to forsake *Moses*, saying, that they need not to circumcise their children, nor walk after the customs, they were exceedingly offended at him for it; yet that was a mere aspersions upon him as appears from *Acts xxi. 20, 21.* (See the note there.)

on Christ alone for justification, and acceptance with God to eternal life: And as jars and discords were hereby removed, and *Gentile* converts were excused from submitting to the burdensome yoke of the ceremonial law, which they had always been prejudiced against, their number daily increased, to the honour of Christ, the enlargement of the church, and the salvation of many souls.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.

6 Now the apostle and his associates, having visited the several churches, where they had formerly preached, were minded to proceed to other parts, where they never had been before: Accordingly they travelled through *Phrygia* and *Galatia*, two provinces of the *Lesser Asia*; and there they preached the gospel, with good success, to the conversion of idolatrous *Gentile* sinners: (chap. xviii. 23. compared with Gal. iv. 8, 9.) And when after this, they would have gone into the proconsular *Asia*, which is but a small part of what is called the *Lesser Asia*, in distinction from the whole *Asiatic continent*, the Holy Spirit, by secret suggestion to one or more of their minds, prevented their going, for the present, to preach in that country; God thereby intimating, that he, in a sovereign way and manner, sends his gospel, orders and disposes of his servants and their labours, how, when, and where he pleases, for accomplishing the purposes of his grace in their proper season.

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

7 Then, being diverted from thence, they came to another adjoining province, called *Mysia*, intending to go from thence to the region of *Bithynia*, both which were also in the *Lesser Asia*: But here the Spirit of God interposed again, and did not permit them to bend their course at this time thither, he having work for them first to do in other parts. (ver. 12, &c.)

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

8 Leaving therefore *Mysia* and *Bithynia*, (ver. 7.) without exercising their ministry in either of those countries, they went forwards, under divine direction, to the city of *Troas*, which was near the place where the ancient famous *Troy* had stood, and lay upon the coast of the *Egean* sea.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

9 And while they were there, the apostle *Paul* had a supernatural vision in the night-season to direct his way: There stood by him an angel, who appeared in the form of a man, dressed after the fashion of the *Macedonians*; and, speaking in their dialect, earnestly entreated his assistance, laying, Be pleased to come over into our *European* country, and, by your prayers and preaching, to do what in you lies, to recover us from our ignorance and errors, idolatry and

and slavery, under the power of sin and Satan, and to lead us into the knowledge of salvation, which we need as much as any people whatsoever, and which it is your office and delight to communicate: O come and help us, as you have many others.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore looking from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by

10 And after he had been favoured with this heavenly vision, and communicated it to his companions at Troas, where the writer of this history joined him*, we immediately prepared to set out with all possible speed for Macedonia, being all of us, in concurrence with him, fully satisfied from what he had told us, that the Lord Jesus had hereby intimated his will, that we should think of no other place for the present, but go without delay, and publish the glad tidings of salvation, and propose them to the acceptance of the people of that Grecian province.

11 Going therefore aboard, and setting sail by the very first opportunity from Troas, we steered directly for, and had a prosperous voyage, by the will of God, to Samothracia, a small island lying off the western coast of Thrace; and, on the morrow, we sailed from thence to Neapolis, a sea-port on the European continent, which was formerly reckoned to Thrace, and afterwards to Macedonia.

12 And continuing our course from thence, through the gulph of Strymon, we arrived at Philippi, so called from Philip king of Macedon, which is, in the way from Neapolis †, the first town or city one comes to in that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony; its inhabitants chiefly consisting of that sort of people, and being governed by Roman laws and magistrates: (ver. 21.) And there, God having work for us to do, (ver. 14, 25, &c.) we continued a considerable time preaching Christ to them.

13 And when the Sabbath-day came on, after our arrival thither, we went out of the city, to the side of a river, where was († νεανειον) a house of prayer, to

NOTES

* As here Luke, the writer of this history, alters his stile, beginning to speak, as he afterwards frequently does, in the first person plural; it is the common opinion of expositors, that it was at Troas that he met with the apostle Paul, and first came to be a fellow-traveller with, and assistant to him; and, from that time forward, most commonly attended him, and was an eye and ear-witness of many things hereafter related.

† Thessalonica, was the metropolis of Macedonia, and therefore Philippi was not the chief city of that province, but was (νεανειον) the first city of

that part of Macedonia that the apostle and his company arrived at, after their passing by Neapolis, in the course they had taken from Troas. See my sermon at the ordination of Mr. Gibbon. Nevertheless, Dr. Wells, tells us, that it was the chief city of that part of Macedonia, which being formerly reckoned to Thrace, as lying east of the river Strymon, the old middle boundary, was therefore more distinctly stiled Macedonia Thracica, or Thracia, Macedonia. Geogr. of the New Testament, part ii. p. 69.

† The Jews had their προσκυβια, or oratories,

first-side, where
prayer was wont
to be made; and
she sat down, and
spoke unto the wo-
men which resorted
thither.

to which both *Jews* and proselytes were allowed, e-
ven in this *Roman* colony, and were accustomed to re-
sort, for addressing the Divine Majesty: And the a-
postle *Paul*, with the rest of us, sitting down at this
place, took an opportunity of talking to the people,
which were mostly religious women, that were wont
to assemble there for exercises of devotion; and to
lead them into the knowledge of Christ, and the way
of salvation through faith in him.

14 And a cer-
tain woman na-
med *Lydia*, a sell-
er of purple, of the
city of *Thyatira*,
which worshipped
God, heard us:
whose heart the
Lord opened, that
she attended unto
the things which
were spoken of
Paul.

14 And while *Paul*, particularly, was opening and
recommending the gospel to the whole assembly, there
was among them an industrious woman, *Lydia* by
name, who was a dealer in the purple trade, and a
native of *Thyatira*, a city of *Asia the Less*, (*Rev. i.*
11.) but was brought by Providence to settle with
her family, (*ver. 15.*) at *Philippi*, and was a devout
Gentile, who worshipped the God of *Israel*, though
she did not conform to the whole of the *Mosaic* law:
This woman, being present, heard the blessed tidings
of salvation; and the Lord Jesus, by an internal, se-
cret, gracious operation of his Spirit, so effectually
opened the eyes of her understanding, and all the pow-
ers of her soul, (*πνεῦμα*) that she seriously and close-
ly attended to, reflected upon, applied to herself, and
obedientially received with faith and love, the suitable
and important truths that were delivered with great
perspicuity and fervour by that eminent apostle of the
Gentiles.

15 And when
she was baptized
and her household,
she brought us,
saying, If ye have
judged me to be
faithful to the
Lord, come into
my house, and
while there. And
she constrained us.

15 And when, having believed with the heart un-
to righteousness, and confessed with her mouth to sal-
vation, she and her family, (see the note on *ver. 33.*)
were baptized, on the foot of the covenant made with
Abraham, and his spiritual as well as natural seed,
(*Gen. xvii. 7.* compared with *Gal. iii. 27,—29.*)
she was so affected with the mercy shewn to her and
hers, and so very desirous of testifying her respect to
us, and of being further instructed in the great doc-
trines of the gospel, that she earnestly entreated us,
saying, If ye count me to have received the grace of
God in truth, and to be a faithful believer in Christ,
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prophetias, or places of prayer, as well
as *synagogues*; the difference between
which was, that their *proseuchae* were
without their towns or cities, and were
places compassed with a wall, or some
other inclosure, and, open above, like
our courts, and were principally used for
prayer; whereas their *synagogues* were
within their cities or towns, and were
covered houses, where not only prayers
to God, but the law and the prophets
were also read and expounded; and as

there were but few *Jews* at *Philippi*,
they seem to have had only one of these
houses of prayer, which was chiefly re-
sorted to by the good women, but was
well known to be there, and was allow-
ed of by the law of the *Romans*, to be used
according to the custom of the *Jews* and
proselytes. (*ἐν νομίῳ τοῦ ποσειδωνίου*)
See Dr. *Hammond* and *Whitby* on the
place, and Mr. *Joseph Mede*'s works, p.
86,—90.

I beg you would favour me so far, as to come and make my house your home: And she was so exceeding importunate, that she prevailed with us to take up our abode with her, as *Lot* over-persuaded the angels at *Sodom*, (Gen. xix. 3.) and as the disciples constrained our Lord at *Emmaus*. (Luke xxiv. 29. see the note there.)

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

16 And while we resided there, as we were one day going (*us πορεύοντι*) to the house of prayer for religious exercises, a certain young servant-maid (*παῖς δαίμονος*) met us in the way, who was possessed with an evil spirit, pretending to foretell future events, like those women that delivered the ambiguous oracles of *Apollo* at *Delfos*, by the artifice of the devil, and his agents the priests; and the people were so deluded with a notion of her extraordinary skill in fortune-telling, that they frequently consulted, and rewarded her, for the intelligence they wanted on divers occasions; and so she brought abundance of wealth, by her diabolical art, to her masters that kept her.

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

17 This woman turning back and following Paul and the rest of us, cried out with a loud voice (like the possessed man in the days of our Saviour on earth, Luke iv. 33, 34. see the note there,) saying, These strangers are sent and commissioned by, and are devoted to, the supreme and only true God, who is far exalted above all gods; they are to be esteemed and received as his faithful servants, who by their doctrine make known to us, that sit in darkness, the only true way of deliverance from all our sin and misery, and of obtaining eternal happiness.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul being grieved, turned, and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

18 And she, to ingratiate herself with us, took opportunities of repeating this encomium, time after time, for several days successively, without our taking any public notice of it; we being desirous to wait the event, and see how God might over-rule this surprising occurrence: But, at length, when there was reason to fear that some might take it to proceed from a confederacy between the devil and us, and others might look upon it to be all banter and ridicule, and so, one way or other, there might be danger of its turning to the discredit and hindrance of the gospel: the apostle was extremely troubled to think how the devil, who reigned among these heathens, abused this poor woman, and deceived the people by her, and was like to prejudice them against the truth: And therefore, to shew that we needed not, and would not rest the credit of our cause upon, but would reject her testimony, and that the divine Saviour, whom we served and preached, is indeed, together with the Father and Spirit, the most high God, infinitely superior

perior to all demons, *Paul*, by an impulse of the Spirit of God, turned himself about, and said, with holy zeal and indignation, to the evil spirit that possessed her, I solemnly charge you, not from any virtue or excellency in me, but in the name of my great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and by his authority, whose power will make my words effectual, to depart from the young woman: And, according to his word, the evil spirit immediately quitted his possession, and left her.

19 But (δι) when her masters, who used to reap the profits of her divinations, saw that, by this miracle performed upon her, they had lost all farther means and hopes of getting any secular advantage by her, as formerly; they, instead of rejoicing and blessing God for the mercy and power shewn in her deliverance, or of embracing the gospel which was thus evidently confirmed, were so exasperated against us, that they, in a riotous manner, seized *Paul* and *Silas*, the two chief and most active men of our company, and dragged them away by main force to the Forum, or court of judicature, (ἡλικυσαις καὶ τῶν ἀγορῶν) where the civil magistrates (ἀρχόνται) were then sitting on the bench.

20 And having in this manner brought them before their rulers, they, concealing their own private resentments, under a pretence of zeal for the public welfare, endeavoured to stir up enemies against them, by spiteful accusations, saying, These men, who are a parcel of Jewish foreigners, contemptible fellows, and exceeding odious to our nation, are the pest of the city, having raised sedition and tumults, and thrown all things into confusion amongst us.

21 Yea, (καὶ) by their pestilent discourses and preachments, they publish, and would introduce amongst us such strange pernicious doctrines and customs, in opposition to our gods, and the religion and manners of our country, as we, who are a Roman colony, are obliged, by the very laws of the empire itself, neither to admit of, nor (ποιεῖν) to put in practice.

22 And this invidious charge and outcry, so incensed all ranks of people against *Paul* and *Silas*, that the

N O T E

* Some think that the word (ἀρχόνται) rendered rulers, ver. 19. were the civil powers; and that the word (εἰσαγόμενοι) here rendered magistrates, were the military officers, or the captains of the Roman garrison. But as these terms are sometimes promiscuously used in a law for civil as well as military officers, and the cognizance of this cause was brought before the magistrates (εἰσαγόμενοι) and they were the persons who afterwards acknowledged their error, and set *Paul* and *Silas* at liberty, desiring them to depart out of the city, (ver. 25. — 39.) I rather take them to be only different names, as the *duumviri* and *prætores* also were, of the civil magistrates.

together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely.

24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's

the mob rose upon them with great fury, as though they would have torn them to pieces; and the magistrates, without any formal trial, or so much as hearing what these men of God had to say for themselves, ordered their officers, the *licitors*, to strip their cloaths off from their backs, and to scourge them severely with their rods; so shamefully were they treated at *Philippi*, as though they had been the most infamous malefactors. (1 *Thess.* ii. 2.)

23 And when their unrighteous commands had been executed, by cruelly lashing their bodies with many smart and repeated strokes above measure (2 *Cor.* xi. 23.) they committed them to the common jail, with a strict charge to the keeper of the prison to take all possible care in securing them, that they might by no means make their escape.

24 Accordingly he having received such particular orders, and being as unmerciful in his temper as his masters could wish him to be, clapt up the prisoners in a dark and filthy dungeon, in the innermost and safest part of the jail; and for further security as well as annoyance to them, he fastened their legs in a pair of stocks.

25 But (24) in the dead of that very night, Paul and Silas, though so full of sores, by the inhuman stripes that had been laid upon them, and though shut up in a noisome dungeon, and placed in a most uneasy situation in the stocks, were so lifted above the terrors of their enemies, and the hardships they endured, and so abundantly filled with the joys of the Holy Ghost in their own souls, that they spent their time in committing themselves and their cause to God by prayer, and in as cheerfully singing hymns of praise to him, (*quousque*) for the honour he had put upon them, in counting them worthy to suffer shame on Christ's account, and for their hopes of still further glorifying him on the earth, and being, at length glorified with him in heaven, as if they had been in the most easy circumstances, and surrounded with all the pomp and delights of a palace: And in the favour of their spirits they exalted their voices to such a degree, that the rest of the prisoners heard the sound of their heavenly songs.

26 And, that God might give a miraculous testimony of his graciously owning them, and of his forgiveness against their enemies for so shamefully abusing them, there was, all on a sudden, an awful and exceeding great earthquake, insomuch that the foundation of the prison was sensibly shaken by it: And at the same time, all the doors flew open, as it were of their own accord, in an instant, and all the bonds

men's hands were
loosed.

and fetters, that had been put upon them and the rest of the prisoners, dropped off at once; thereby intimating, that God's terrors need not make his people afraid, how much soever others may be justly dismayed at them; and that Christ, by the gospel, which his servants preached, *proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* (Isa. lxi. 1.)

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

27 Hereupon the jailor being awaked out of his sleep by the surprising shock of the earthquake, and by the clattering and noise that attended it; and rising, and seeing that the doors of the prison, though so carefully shut over-night, were all thrown open; he, in the terror of his mind, and under fearful apprehensions of being charged with a most criminal breach of trust, and being also a man of a rash temper, immediately drew his sword: And as self-murder was allowed of by many heathen philosophers, as the last remedy in distress, he was going to stab himself, concluding that the prisoners had all made their escape, and that he, according to the *Roman law*, should be forced to suffer the worst of punishment, that was designed for any of them; especially considering the strict charge, that had been given him, but the day before, to secure *Paul and Silas.* (ver. 23.)

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.

28 But *Paul* perceiving his wicked design, and what put him upon it; and being moved with a noble Christian compassion toward the man who had despitefully used him, and with a holy indignation at such a criminal attempt, cried out aloud, and with great earnestness, saying, Do not offer to commit any act of violence upon yourself, which would be sinning against your own life, and soul too; for, though we had opportunity enough to have run away, we are all still here; I and my companion having no inclination, and the rest of the prisoners no power to fly, God so ordering it for your safety.

29 Then he called for a light, and spring in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.

29 Then the jailor, calling for lights, that he might look about him, ran with all speed into the inner prison; and being full of dread and horror at such an awful appearance of God, in favour of these his servants, and against the unrighteous proceedings of their enemies; and being at the same time struck by an inward work of the Holy Spirit, with a deep conviction of his own heinous guilt, as a sinner against God, he came shuddering all over, through a sense of his danger of divine wrath; and, with hurry and confusion, threw himself down at the feet of *Paul and Silas*, as one that would beg their pardon for his ill-usage of them, and would now treat them with the utmost reverence, and resign himself up to their

may all his
your servant

30 And brought
them out, and said,
Sirs, what must I
do to be saved?

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direction, for the relief of his distressed and sinful soul.

30 And when he had led them in a respectful manner out of the dungeon, he, amazed to think of the sad condition he was in, earnestly entreated them, saying, Sirs, as I have heard, (*ver. 17.*) and a divine power has now miraculously bore witness to it, that ye are the servants of the most high God, to shew unto men the way of salvation, I beg that, notwithstanding all my unworthiness, and provocations to God and you, ye would have compassion upon such a miserable, guilty, ignorant, helpless wretch as I am, and would tell me, whether there may be any hope for me; and, if so, what I must do to obtain the forgiveness of all my sins, and deliverance from the dreadful wrath which I have deserved, and which, as my conscience now tells me, I am in the utmost danger of.

31 And they said,
Believe on the Lord
Jesus Christ, and
thou shalt be sa-
ved, and thy house.

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31 And as they rejoiced to find that his conscience was awakened, and that his chief concern was about the salvation of his soul; and as they were as willing to preach the gospel to this *idolatrous Gentile*, as they had been before to proselytes of the gate, (*ver. 13, 14.*) so they readily replied, The sum of our answer to your important question is, that, under all your affecting sense of ignorance, guilt, and danger, you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach, as the only Saviour of lost sinners; and receive our testimony concerning him with full assent and consent to it, as divine, and suitable to your own wants and miseries, accepting of him, and depending upon him, as your prophet, to enlighten you by his word and Spirit; as your priest, to reconcile you to God by his atoning death; and as your King, to subdue your soul to himself, by his victorious grace. And in this way, not only you yourself, vile as you have been, shall have all the salvation that you need, and are so desirous of, even unto eternal life; but your family also shall be partakers of the means, and be brought into the way, and under the promise of salvation *.

32 Accordingly

N O T E.

* It is not to be supposed, that, by virtue of the jailor's own faith, all that were in his house should be effectually and eternally saved; and therefore the apostle here seems to intend, that as the jailor would by faith become a true son of Abraham, so God would bring him into his covenant, in which he promised to be a God to him and to his seed; (*Gen. xvii. 7.*) but it was not proper for the a-

postle to mention this privilege in those terms whilst he was speaking to a heathen, who was a stranger to the Old Testament, as he afterwards did to the Gentile church, (*Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29.*) and as our Lord had intimated it concerning *Zaccheus*, when he said at his conversion, *This day is salvation come to this house, for as much as he also is the Son of Abraham.* (*Luke xix. 9.*)

And they
made into him the
word of the Lord,
and to all that
were in his house.

And he took
the same
hour of the night,
and washed their
feet; and was
upward, he and
his straightway.

32 Accordingly they preached the Lord Jesus, and salvation through him, not to the jailor only, but likewise to all his family, whom he had brought together in the greatness of his concern for their eternal welfare, that they, as well as he himself, might hear, and that all their souls might live, by means of the religious instructions that should be given them.

33 And his own heart was, through divine grace, so powerfully impressed with these blessed tidings, that, in love and gratitude to the heavenly messengers who brought them, he, with all speed, though it was so late in the night, suppled, cleansed, and dressed their sores and lettering wounds, which had been made by the severe whipping the day before: (ver. 23.) And then, declaring that he unfeignedly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation*, he and his

NOTE

* There is no room to doubt, considering Abraham's character, but that when he first made his covenant with him and his seed, and ordered every male in his house to be circumcised, all the adult males of his family were instructed in the knowledge of God, and of his covenant, in order to their having the token of it applied to them, as well as to the children and himself, according to God's appointment: (Gen. xvii. 7.—14. and xviii. 1.) And the same may be said with respect to the Jewish proselytes and their families; since, as to this point, there was one law to the Israelites and the strangers, (Exod. xii. 48, 49.) and, if we may depend on the Jewish doctors, adult proselytes, and their houses were to be baptized by their own consent: (see *insinuat* on Gen. xvii. 12.) And therefore its being said, that Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to the jailor, and all that were in his house, (ver. 32.) when the gospel-seal of the covenant was to be applied to him and his, is no more an argument against his having had children that were baptized, than it is that there were no male infants in Abraham's family to be circumcised, nor any infants in the families of proselytes to be baptized, as well as circumcised; because the grown persons both were to be instructed, before either of those rites were to be applied to them, as the grown persons in the jailor's house were first to be taught, that they might be baptized upon their own rational profession of faith, and by their own consent. And if any suppose that there were no children in his house, nor Lydia's, (ver. 15.) they take that for

granted, which it is impossible to prove; but it is certain, that the terms *household*, and *a man's house*, all along in the Old Testament, generally include the children of the family; and if, as it is thought by many, it had been a well-known, and long continued custom among the Jews, to admit proselytes into the church of Israel, by baptizing them and their whole families, inclusive of their infants, (see *Lightf.* Harm. on John i. 25.) there is a plain reference to that custom, when in this chapter it is said, that Lydia and her house, and the jailor and all his were baptized: And it is very remarkable in my account, that in this history of the Acts of the Apostles, God's covenant with his people and their seed, and the application of the New Testament-seal of it to children, as well as grown persons, is strongly intimated, first with respect to the converted Jews, afterwards to the proselytes of the gate, and then again to the idolatrous Gentiles, in some of the first openings of the gospel-dispensation among them respectively: As to the Jews, the apostle Peter called them to repent and be baptized, because the promise was to them and to their children, and ran in the like strain to such as should be called from among the Gentiles: (Acts ii. 38, 39.) As to the proselytes of the gate, Lydia and her household, ver. 15. or, as the Syriac has it, the children of her house were baptized; which shews at least, that in those early times, children were deemed such parts of the household as were baptized: As to idolatrous Gentiles, the jailor and all his were baptized. And it seems highly improbable, that the jailor and his

his whole family were immediately baptized; and were admitted to all the privileges of the gospel, and came under the strongest engagements to be the Lord's according to the tenor of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed; in token of which, both Abraham himself, and all the males, whether elder or younger, in his house, were circumcised. (*Gen. xv. 7, 9, &c.*)

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

34 After this, in further testimony of his respect to these ambassadors of peace, he brought them into his dwelling-house, and set before them the best provisions he had, to refresh them, after their great fatigues and sufferings; and (*πιστεύων*) having believed in Christ as a divine Mediator, and in God as the Father of mercies through him, according to the apostle's direction, (*ver. 31.*) he * exceedingly rejoiced with his whole family, running about, and expressing his ecstasy in every part of his house, like one that leaped for joy.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.

35 Now on the next morning, as soon as it was well day, the rulers reflecting on, and seeing the error, in their rash and illegal proceedings, which they had been guilty of against Paul and Silas, (*ver. 22, 23.*) privately sent some of their under-officers, called *licitors*, with a message to the jailor, ordering him to discharge the men, without any more ado, that had been the day before committed to his custody; hoping thereby to smother their male-administration, and to escape the vengeance of God and man, which they had reason to fear on this account †.

36 And the keeper

36 The jailor, extremely pleased at such an uncon-

NOTES.

his house were baptized by immersion; since, as far as appears, that ordinance was all on a sudden administered to them severally, while they were in the prison; and since the mangled condition of Paul and Silas's bodies, by means of their being severely scourged the day before, made it very improper, not to say unsafe, for them to go at midnight into the water so deep, as that mode of baptizing would oblige them to do.

* One sense that I have given of this passage, is according to Mr. Henry's observation that it may be read, "He believing in God, rejoiced all the house over;" (*πᾶν οἶκον*) he went to every apartment expressing his joy." And it is evident that the words (*παλαίστο πιστεύων*) he having believed, rejoiced, expresses only his own, and not his family's faith and joy.

† As they had doubtless heard of the

miraculous cure of the possessed damonian (*ver. 18.*) and had probably felt the shock of the earthquake, (*ver. 16.*) and perhaps had received some account of the extraordinary transaction that ensued upon it in the prison, (*ver. 27.*) they might justly fear that God would punish them for the injuries they had done to his servants, whom he had so remarkably owned. And as they had certainly abused their authority, in ordering them to be whipped and imprisoned without a legal trial and uncondemned, and that on account of their religious opinions, which, being deemed to be Jewish, (*ver. 20, 21.*) was under the protection of the Roman laws, they had reason to expect the severest animadversions from the superior powers; and so might well be afraid of the vengeance both of God and man, unless they retracted what they had done.

of the prison told
his saying to Paul,
The magistrates
have sent to let
you go: now there-
fore depart, and go
in peace.

mon turn in favour of those who had been so signally kind and serviceable to him, and whom he now so affectionately loved; immediately acquainted the apostle *Paul* with the message he had received, saying, our magistrates, that were so severe upon you, have now bethought themselves, and sent me orders to dismiss you; let me therefore beg of you to get away as quietly, and as fast as you can, that ye may improve your liberty while ye have it, lest their minds should soon alter again; and may all the blessings of heaven attend your persons and labours wherever ye go!

37 But *Paul* said
unto them, They
have beaten us o-
nely uncondemned,
being Romans,
and have cast us
into prison; and
do they thrust
us out privily? nay
only; but let
them come them-
selves and fetch us
out.

37 But *Paul*, thinking that the credit of Christianity, and the safety of the disciples in those parts, required his asserting and vindicating his own innocence, and his civil as well as religious rights, said, to the officers that brought the message, and were standing by, Your masters have, in an arbitrary, cruel, and opprobrious manner, publicly ordered us to be beaten with rods, and committed us to jail, as if we had been the vilest of slaves and malefactors, and that without so much as hearing the merits of the cause, and what we had to say for ourselves, in direct violation of all law and justice, and of our privileges as we are freemen of *Rome*; (see the note on chap. xv. 22.) and do they now pretend, in a clandestine way, (*αβυστῶν*) to turn us out, as if we had broke prison, and to expel us their territories, without any open acknowledgment of their fault, and of our innocence? No, truly, we shall not accept of our liberty upon such inglorious terms as would leave a reproach upon our characters, and a vail upon their tyranny; but if they would acquit themselves with honour and equity, let them come in person, and discharge us in a legal manner, by as public an act of their own as that whereby they have so unlawfully abused us; that all the people may know the wrong they have done us.

38 And the ser-
vants told these
things unto the
magistrates: and
they feared when
they heard that
they were Ro-
mans.

38 Then (αἱ) the officers, returning, reported these complaints and claims of right to the magistrates; and when they understood that the prisoners, whom they had abused, were citizens of *Rome*, they were terribly frightened, lest the indignities they had put upon them should come to the ears of their superiors, and they should be punished for transgressing the *Porcian* law, then in force, which expressly forbids a *Roman* citizen's being whipped with rods.

39 And they
came and besought
them, and brought
them out, and de-
manded them to de-
part out of the ci-

39 And as they feared the wrath of man more than the wrath of God, they immediately, coming to *Paul* and *Silas*, entreated them, in a civil and courteous manner, not to take the advantage of law against them, but to pass by the injuries they had done them; and, conducting them publicly and respect-
fully

ly out of prison, they begged that they would quietly to accept of their liberty, and withdraw from their city and jurisdiction, that there might be no further disturbance among them.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

40 And as these noble confessors were thus honourably discharged, and were men of a forgiving spirit, far from seeking revenge, they put up the affront that had been offered to them; and, peaceably departing from the prison, returned to their lodging at Lydia's house: And when they had seen the Christian companions, and the disciples that had been made at Philippi, and had told them, for their comfort and encouragement, how wonderfully the Lord had appeared for them since their confinement; and when (*παρηκαλουν*) they had furthermore exhorted the new converts to go on in his ways, trusting in him to carry them through all difficulties and dangers, and to preserve them to his heavenly kingdom, they took their leave of them, and proceeded to other places where he had further work for them to do.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What need have we of wisdom from above, to direct us when to condescend to the infirmities of the weak, as the great apostle of the *Gentiles* did in circumcising *Timothy*, and delivering the decrees to be kept; and when to assert our just rights and privileges, civil as well as religious, in imitation of his noble remonstrance against the arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings of the magistrates, who, contrary to all law and justice, had scourged and imprisoned him and *Silas* for their religion, though they were *Romans*? And where such meek and courageous, patient, and Christian-like conduct is joined with a plain and faithful preaching of salvation, alone through the Lord Jesus, how remarkably does God own it, to the credit and propagation of the gospel, the increase of converts, the comfort, edification, and peace of the church, and their establishment in the faith! But what sovereignty does he dispose of the ministrations of his servants! He suffers them not to go to some places to which their own inclinations would have led them, and sends them to others, where he has more work for them to do; and when he plainly hints of his Providence and Spirit, agreeable to the design of his word, that he has called them to preach the gospel there, and that it shall not be in vain, though many adversaries may be raised against them: But how different is the manner of his gracious operation in the conversion of sinners! He sweetly and gently opens some hearts, as he did *Lydia's*; and makes his way to others, as he did to the jailor's, through such terrors as thoroughly awaken their consciences, and like the earthquake, shake the foundation of their carnal peace and confidence, and make them tremble and cry out in deep distress, What shall we do to be saved? And, O what rich encouragement is there to souls that, under a moving sense of their guilt and danger, are earnest in inquiries of this sort! Christ and his salvation are brought nigh to them, that, through faith in him, they may be delivered from sin and wrath; and that their horror and anguish may be turned into joy and gladness. And when God is at work upon heads of families, as they would have all under their care partakers of the benefit with themselves; so the promises of salvation are brought to their seed, that they and all theirs, may be baptised, and the heart, that is opened to receive the gospel, opens again in love, respect, and kindness to the servants of Christ, and opens the house to entertain and lodge them, and the hand to wash their stripes, if there be occasion for it. O blessed gospel, which has such excellent effects, when it comes with power! It is designed to bring help to them that are perishing in their sins; and lies directly contrary to all the interests of the devil, though he is sometimes forced to own that it is

God; but as it needs no testimony from that deceiver of souls, to his power is demonstrated, and its captives are set free by its means: And yet, alas! how does a worldly, selfish spirit oppose its great and glorious design, and its faithful preachers, under pretence of maintaining the public peace! And with what fury does a persecuting temper run out against them, till either the fear of man restrains it, or the fear of God changes it: But Christ will support and honour his suffering servants; he will give them such inward consolations, as shall make them sing for joy, even in dungeons and the stocks, and under wounds and reproaches for his name's sake; and he will vindicate their character, and bring about their deliverance in an honourable way, that they may be at liberty to go on with the work he further calls them to, and that his people may be comforted.

C H A P. XVII.

Paul arrives, and preaches at Thessalonica, where some believe, and others persecute him, 1,—9. He goes to Berea, and preaches with good success there, till the persecuting Jews follow him, and drive him from thence, 10,—14. He is conducted to Athens, where he preaches Jesus and the resurrection, and disputes with the Athenian philosophers against idolatry, and several persons are converted, 15,—34.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

NOW when Paul*, with Silas and Timothy, (ver. 15.) had travelled from Philippi through the Grecian cities of Amphipolis† and Apollonia, they arrived at Thessalonica, which, according to the signification of its name, was so called on account of the victory obtained by Philip of Macedonia over the Thessalonians, and was the metropolis of the province of Macedonia, (see the note on chap. xvi. 12.) where the Jews were very numerous, and had synagogues, at which they used to assemble for religious worship.

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

2 And that they might not complain of being neglected, or of the Gentiles being preferred before them, the apostle Paul, according to his constant custom, where there were Jewish synagogues, first of all repaired thither; and because on their Sabbaths there was the greatest concourse of people, he, for three of those days successively, took abundance of pains in discoursing and arguing with them from the scriptures of the Old Testament, for which they professed to have the highest veneration.

3 The

N O T E S.

* Luke seems to have been left at Philippi, and to have continued in those parts, travelling about from place to place among the churches, till the apostle returned to this city again; for here he leaves off speaking of himself as one of Paul's company, and does not resume it till we find them together there: (αμφι, τῇ πόλει)

(chap. xx. 5, 6.) After which he constantly uses it to the end of the history.

† Amphipolis is supposed to be so called, because, as Thucydides tells us, (lib. iv. p. 321.) the river Strymon, on which it was situated, ran round that city.

3 Opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

3 The main scope of his preaching among them was to explain those inspired and prophetic writings in their reference to Christ, and to shew from thence that the Messiah, promised to the Jews, was not to be a temporal prince, as they fondly expected, but crucified Saviour, how much soever they might be prejudiced against him on that account; and that, according to those ancient predictions, it was necessary that the Messiah should undergo the severest sufferings even unto death, for the expiation of sin, and should rise again with triumph from the dead, for the vindication of his character, and the advancement of his person to his throne and kingdom at the Father's right hand, as he himself had declared, (*Luke xxii. 26, 27.*) and for the justification of them that believed in him. (*Rom. iv. 25.*) And then the apostle demonstrated, that all these things had been punctually fulfilled in that very Jesus, and in no other, whom, faith he, I preach to you as the only Saviour; and that therefore he must needs be the true Messiah.

4 And some of them believed, and comforted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

4 And these discourses were delivered and attended with such evidence and power of the Spirit, that some of the Jews were persuaded and enabled, by divine grace, to receive the gospel, not as the word of men, but (as it is in *Truth*) the word of God, which worked so effectually in them, that they believed in the Lord Jesus, as the Christ of God; (*1 Thess. ii. 13.*) and thereupon adhered to Paul and Silas, embracing the doctrine they preached, and associating with them (*συνεσθαι*) as persons that were joined to them by a gracious lot, under the disposal of a divine choice. (*1 Thess. i. 4, 5.*) The like happy change was also wrought upon a great multitude of religious Greeks, and on no small number of women of distinction among them, who, as proselytes of the gate, attended synagogue-worship.

NOTE

* Though our historian, who aimed at brevity, and not at ostentation, speaks only of Paul's preaching to the Jews for three Sabbath-days, and of the conversion of many of them, and of the proselytes of the gate, (see the note on chap. xlii. 17.) and takes no notice of conversions from among the idolatrous Gentiles at Thessalonica, as having recorded facts of that sort in several other places, especially where he himself was present as an eye-witness, which he was not here; yet it seems evident, that the apostle staid a considerable time longer at this city, and that he preached abundantly to the idolatrous Gentiles, many of which were

converted likewise by that means: For he speaks of the *Philippians* as having sent once and again to his necessity, during his abode at Thessalonica; (*Phil. iv. 16.*) and in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, which was wrote within about a year after he had been with them, and was the first epistle that he sent to any church, it appears that he laboured night and day among them; (*chap. ii. 9.*) and that the members of that church mostly consisted of such Gentiles, as turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead; and that the number of these was great.

But the Jews
which believed not,
moved with eo-
them took unto
certain lewd
men of the ba-
ser sort, and ga-
thered a company,
and set all the city
in uproar, and
surrounded the house
of Jason, and sought
to bring them out
to the people.

And when they
found them not,
they drew Jason,
and certain bre-
thren, unto the
doors of the ci-
ty, crying, These
men have turned
the world upside
down, are some
other also;

Whom Jason
had received: and
all do com-
plicity to the de-
vils of Caesar, say-
ing, That there is
another king, one

And they
troubled the peo-
ple,

5 But those *Jews*, who, being left to themselves, obstinately persisted in their unbelief, were filled with envious indignation at the success of *Paul's* preaching, when they saw so many embrace the gospel, and some of their own countrymen among them; and therefore consulting with, and getting together, a company of rude, profligate, and vulgar fellows, the very scum of the mob, that were the fittest of all others to serve their vile and malicious purposes, they made a riot in the city, to the great disturbance and terror of its inhabitants; and going to the house of *Jason*, where the apostle and his companions lodged, (*ver. 7.*) they beset it in a mutinous manner, and demanded his delivering them up, that they might pull them out, and expose them to the fury of all the populace.

6 But (3.) missing of them, who had withdrawn to some other place, they seized upon *Jason*, the master of the family, and some others of his brethren in Christ that were with him, and dragged them away to the *Roman* magistrates, who had the government of the city in their hands; and, to make the Christians appear as odious and obnoxious as possible, they cried out, with rage and clamour, against the apostle and his associates, who were, in reality, the great instruments of reforming mankind. The men that have been so infamous for stirring up sedition, destroying all peace and order, and throwing the world into dreadful confusion, by pretending to set up a new religion, wherever they have been; these notorious incendiaries are now so bold and daring, as to come even to this great metropolis, to spread their pestilential heresies, and make the like disturbance amongst us here.

7 These dangerous men has *Jason* encouraged and countenanced, entertained and harboured at his house: And all their followers, some of which are now brought before you, are so disaffected to the government, that they go into treasonable principles and practices against the emperor; and in direct contradiction to his laws, which forbid any one's taking the title of king without his leave, they preach up, and profess to own another person under that royal character, that has no legal pretensions to it; even one *Jesus*, whom they first set up for king of the *Jews*, and afterwards proclaimed him *Lord of all*, (*chap. x. 36.*) in opposition to *Caesar*, to whom alone our allegiance is due.

8 This accusation of such high crimes and misdemeanours alarmed the common people and the magi-

E e 2

strates,

N O T E

at, on occasion the spreading abroad of their faith God-ward in every place,
chap. i. 8.—10. (See Dr. Benson's history of the first planting of the Christian
religion, Vol. II. p. 94.—96.)

ple, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures

ilstrates, who were exceedingly concerned at the hearing of those suggestions; some being afraid lest the good men should be suppressed; others, lest a rebellion should be fomented; and others being in great perplexity of mind, as not knowing what to make of these things, or what they might come to.

9 And the magistrates thinking it their duty to examine more closely into the matter, and finding that the Christians spoke of Jesus as their Lord and King, who was gone to heaven, and exalted on his throne there, which no way threatened *Cæsar's* rights and dominion, they only bound Jason and his brethren over to their good behaviour, and took bail for their appearance, if called for; and then dismissed them, apprehending no danger from them.

10 But (as) the Christian brethren, that had been converted at that place, were so affectionately concerned for the safety of Paul and Silas, and so apprehensive of their coming into trouble, that they sent them away with all speed; and, for the better concealment, in the night, to a neighbouring town or city called Berea; who, upon getting thither, were far from being disheartened by the spiteful treatment of the Jews at Thessalonica, or from refusing to have any thing more to do with that sort of people, either through resentment, or through fear of meeting with the like ill usage from them again, that they went, as usual, to the synagogue, to preach Christ to the Jews and proselytes, (ver. 12.) that met there.

11 These Jews were (synagogues) of more sublime and noble birth, as being born of God*; and were of a more open, frank, and generous spirit, than those at Thessalonica, who were indeed the children of the devil, while they boasted of having Abraham for their father: For the Lord opening their hearts, as he did the heart of Lydia, (chap. xvi. 14.) they

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* As there were doubtless some good people among the Jews of this age; I see no reason to apprehend, but that these noble Bereans were of a truly religious spirit, according to their light, before Paul preached to them; and therefore, by the concurring illumination and influence of the Holy Ghost, they cheerfully embraced Christ, as soon as he was revealed to them. For I think we nowhere meet with a set of Jews, that were so well affected to the gospel, at its first proposal to them, as these. They seemed to be well acquainted with the scriptures, and to pay a conscientious regard to their divine authority, and to

be deeply concerned, that they might not be mistaken, or imposed upon, in the most important points, relating to the Messiah, and the salvation of their souls, and yet heartily willing to receive Christ, upon finding that the characters, under which the Messiah was set forth in the ancient prophecy, were verified in him, and the whole account, here given of them, is such as might be expected in persons, whose hearts were already turned to God, through the promised Messiah, and now rejoiced to find that Jesus was the Christ, and accordingly were converted to him.

laid aside all prejudices, and attended with uprightness, diligence, and candour, to that gospel which was preached to them, and embraced it with all eagerness and cheerfulness of mind: (*μετὰ πάντων ἀποφύσας*) And that they might not take things upon trust, by an implicit faith, and be deceived in matters of the utmost consequence, they carefully and frequently, not only on the Sabbath-days, but likewise on other days all the week long, read, examined, and studied the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the expected Messiah; and compared what they found there, with *Paul's* doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, and salvation alone by him; that they might judge whether the things he declared to them were of divine authority, answerable to former revelations of God's mind and will, or not.

12 And many of them being satisfied by the light and grace of the blessed Spirit, who assisted their inquiries, that what *Paul* delivered harmonized with ancient predictions, they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only true Messiah, and Saviour of sinners; as did also several ladies of quality, that were devout *Gentiles* by religion, as well as *Greeks* by birth, and a considerable number of men of some note, who were likewise proselytes of the gate.

13 But (*δι*) when the unbelieving and inveterate *Jews* at *Thessalonica* were informed, that the gospel of the grace of God was preached by the apostle *Paul*, with great success, at *Berea*, as it had been at their own city, their vexation and envy rose to such a degree, that they pursued him thither; and, like the unwearied and spiteful agents of the devil, who is an implacable enemy to the kingdom and glory of Christ, and the good of immortal souls, used all possible methods of calumny and falsehood, to incense the mob, and spirit up an insurrection against the apostle.

14 Then the Christian converts, who loved as brethren, apprehending danger of an assault upon *Paul*, under the management of those furious *Jewish* zealots, immediately conveyed him out of the city, advising him to take the road that led to the sea-side, as though he designed to get out of their way, by going a ship-board, to prevent their further searching and inquiring after him: But *Silas* and *Timothy* staid behind at *Berea*, as persons that were less obnoxious than the apostle, and might be serviceable for confirming the disciples that had been made there, till they should receive orders to follow him to some other place.

15 And as *Paul* soon quitted that road, under the direction of Providence, the brethren that set out with

11 Therefore many of them believed: also of honourable women which were *Greeks*, and of men not a few.

13 But when the *Jews* of *Thessalonica* had knowledge that the word of God was preached of *Paul* at *Berea*, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away *Paul*, to go as it were to the sea: but *Silas* and *Timotheus* abode there still.

15 And they that conducted *Paul*, brought

brought him unto Athens, and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him: and some said, What will this babler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto

with him, accompanied and assisted him in his long journey of between two and three hundred miles to Athens, the most renowned city of Greece, and the chief seat of learning in the famous university there, to which multitudes resorted from all countries for education in the liberal arts and sciences: And then these brethren took their leave of him, and returned to Berea, with orders to Silas and Timothy to follow him, as soon as possible thither.

16 Now while Paul was waiting at Athens for the arrival of his fellow-labourers, and whilst he was narrowly inspecting the religion and manners of the people, that he might the better adapt his discourses to their peculiar circumstances, his soul within him was thrown into a strong commotion (*ταραχὴ*) between compassionate grief, holy indignation, and fervent zeal for the glory of God, when he observed how entirely the inhabitants of the city in general, under all their high pretences to wisdom and learning, were addicted to the worshipping of idols; there being more statues of various heathen gods here, than in all Greece besides.

17 Therefore, in the greatness of his concern, and yet with meekness of wisdom, he beginning, as usual, first with the Jews and proselytes of the gate, went to the synagogue, where they met for the worship of God, renouncing the idolatry which reigned in that city; and there he preached to them the gospel of salvation alone by Jesus Christ, explained this glorious and important doctrine, proved its divine authority, recommended it to their acceptance, and answered their objections against it: And afterwards he took daily opportunities of discoursing about a risen Saviour, (*ver. 18.*) to any that he could meet with, in places of the greatest concourse for civil commerce.

18 Hereupon, several of the heathen philosophers of two famous sects, whose tenets in various particulars were contrary to each other, and who, notwithstanding all their pretences to wisdom, knew not God, united in their opposition to the apostle, and to his doctrine: Some of these were *Epicureans*, so called from *Epicurus* their founder*: And others were *Stoicks*, so called from their meeting in the *Stoa*, which signifies the porch or portico, in which they had their school at Athens†: Among these, some said

NOTES.

* *Epicurus* held that the world was made by a casual concourse of atoms; that God neither created nor governs it, nor concerns himself about the affairs of mankind; that their gods were of human shape; that pleasure is the chief good; and that there are no rewards or punishments after death.

† The *Stoicks* were monstrously proud and self-conceited, as thinking their wisdom

unto them Jesus, said of *Paul*, in a way of derision, contempt, and scorn, What would this little despicable animal*, this trifling, empty, and prating dealer in vain words pretend to? What would he say to us, or have us believe? And others of them cried out with indignation, He appears to us to have no other view, than to introduce some foreign demons (*dæmones*) amongst us, which we have never received, nor heard of before. And the reason of their so thinking was, because he preached Jesus the Saviour to them under divine characters; and spoke of his resurrection as a divine attestation to him, by the last of which, (*μαρτυρία*) their foolish minds being darkened as to spiritual things, they seemed to understand him to mean such a sort of goddess, as they themselves reckoned *Modesty*, *Fame*, and the like, to be, which they owned for deities, and erected altars to, as such.

19 And that the apostle might have a full hearing, and things might be brought to some issue, they took him along with them to their supreme court of judicature, in the *forum*, called *Arcopagus* †, which was situated on an eminence, and in which the senators, who from thence were called *Arcopagites*, sat and judged of all matters, relating to religion and their gods, as well as to civil concerns: And a great number of philosophers having gathered about him there, they examined him, saying, If the novel tenets, which you go about to introduce and propagate among the people, are not to be kept as secrets, like the mysteries of our gods, will you be so frank as to acquaint us plainly, and without disguise, what they are, that we may form some judgment about them?

20 For you have vented such surprisngly odd and unaccountable notions in our hearing, as we are utter strangers to, and never met with in all our conversation,

NOTES.

* equal to God himself, and held that immortality was eternal, and that the world was God; that a man's chief happiness was in living according to nature and reason; that all things were subject to trial and irresistible fate; and that there might be a future state of rewards and punishments, though their notions were exceedingly absurd, confused, and unsettled about it.

† This babler, (*ὁ ἀρκεπαγόνης λόγος*) observed by the critics to be a term of the utmost contempt, in allusion to a little worthless chattering bird, that used to pick up the seeds which were scattered in the market-place.

‡ *Arcopagus*, says Mr. Shuckford, was an Athenian court, consisting, according

to the different circumstances of their government, sometimes of more, and at others, of fewer judges: Its original number was twelve; but afterwards it increased to three hundred: It had the cognizance of all causes that more particularly concerned the welfare of the state; and under this head all innovations in religion were, in time, brought before the judges of it. *Socrates* was condemned by them for holding opinions contrary to the religion of his country; and the apostle *Paul* seems to have been questioned before them about his doctrines, being thought to be a setter forth of strange gods. *Connect. of sacr. and prof. hist.* Vol. II. p. 266, 267.

our ears: we would know: therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell of to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom

tion, or reading, before; nor do we know what to make of them: We therefore would fain have you further explain yourself, and tell us freely what you mean by them.

21 This they said, not from a desire of getting any good by his doctrine, but to gratify their curiosity; for the natives of *Athen* in general, and the foreigners that came thither for learning, were mighty news-mongers, exceeding fond of new stories and new schemes; and so trifling were they in their tempers, and in their pursuits of knowledge, that they usually wasted their precious time in mere novelties that did not concern themselves; some in telling, and others in listening to things, that were never heard of among them before; as if true wisdom and understanding consisted in nothing else, and were to be obtained and propagated by no other means.

22 Then Paul standing up in the midst of the court of the *Areopagites*, surrounded with senators, philosophers, and numerous spectators, on the top of *Mars-hill*, addressed them, with a noble freedom and courage, in an admirable speech of the following purport, O ye *Athenians*, of all ranks and degrees, who are so highly celebrated for wisdom and learning, since I have had the privilege of being in your famous city, I cannot but observe that ye are greater deists than idolaters; more addicted to the worship of demons who are by nature no gods, and (*disorderly*) more inclined to superstition, than any other people that I ever met with, as appears by the vast multitude of idolatrous statues which are to be seen everywhere among you, and from your own confessed ignorance, at the same time, of the God, who alone ought to be worshipped.

23 For as I passed along in your streets, and took notice of what deities ye adore; I spied an altar which bears an inscription, intimating that it was dedicated to the unknown God †, which is a practical acknowledgment of your ignorance of the true God, and that ye ought to revere him, and would do so.

NOTES.

* I have taken in both Mr. *Joseph Mede's* sense of the word *δαιμόνια*, as signifying demon-worship; and Dr. *Lardner's* sense of it, as signifying disposed to religion. See *Mede's* works, b. iii. chap. vi. p. 783. and *Lardner's* credibility of the gosp. hist. chap. viii. p. 412, 413.

† Some suppose that the altar with this inscription was set up by *Socrates*, to express, in a covert way, his devo-

tion to the only true God, whilst he ridiculed the plurality of the heathen gods for which he was condemned to death. And others, that, whoever erected this altar, it was done in honour to the God of the *Jews*, of whom there was no image, and whose name *Jehovah*, as ineffable, was never pronounced by the *Jews*, and never made known to the idolatrous Gentiles; him therefore the apostle took the opportunity to declare unto them.

When therefore
ignorantly wor-
ship him declare I
to you.

if ye really knew him, who is indeed invisible and incomprehensible: Him therefore, whom ye, notwithstanding all your wisdom and learning, are such utter strangers to, and so stupidly pretend to worship, I am come hither to preach and make known to you, in his being and perfections, will and works, and how he may be acceptably served, glorified, and enjoyed.

24 God that
made the world,
and all things
therein, seeing that
he is Lord of hea-
ven and earth,
dwelleth not in
temples made with
hands:

24. Even that only living and true God, who, contrary to the corrupt notions of some of you, is in reality the infinitely wise and almighty Creator of the universe, and of all things therein, whether they be animate or inanimate, visible or invisible; and is the sovereign Lord, proprietor, possessor, and governor of the upper and lower worlds, and of all the creatures which he has made in both; and so fills all places with his immense presence, and cannot be circumscribed in, or confined to, any particular habitation, not even to the heaven of heavens, which cannot contain him, much less to any temples of wood or stone, that are the work of men's hands, as though he dwelt in them as your demon-gods do.

25 Neither is
worshipped with
men's hands, as
though he needed
any thing, seeing
he giveth to all
life, and breath,
and all things;

25. Nor can he be fitly worshipped or ministered to, (*οὐδὲ λειτουργεῖται*) agreeable to his spiritual nature and holy will, by any shrines, images, or offerings, or any manual art or labour of men; nor indeed can he be in the least profited by any services of such little, mean, contemptible creatures, as we of the human race are; as if this great and all-sufficient Being, who is infinitely above us, could stand in need of any thing that we can do to increase his felicity*: For he is so far from receiving the least addition to his own perfections, glory, and blessedness, from any other, that he is the sole author, the continual, free, and bounteous giver and maintainer of the lives of all the children of men, and of all inferior animals, in which is the breath of life; from him likewise proceeds every good thing that is necessary to their support and comfort, or that they enjoy.

26 And hath
made of one blood,
all nations of men,
to dwell on all
the face of the
earth, and hath de-
termined the times
before appointed,
and the bounds of
their habitation:

26. And, that none might pride themselves in their pedigree, or be unkind and cruel to any of their fellow-creatures, or despair of finding favour with God; he has made all mankind, in every nation under heaven, of one and the same human nature, and originally near a-kin in blood, as he causes every individual of them to descend from the same common parents, whom he at first created, and to whom he has given

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* Some critics observe, that *διόμας* word here used, signifies to want something simply to want, and *ὑπόμας* to want something to make up the perfection of what is totally indigent; but *ὑποδιόμας*, the one already has,

an innumerable offspring, that they, in their proper seasons, might inhabit the several climates of the earth, and might use and enjoy its various riches and productions; he having determinately settled (*apious*) in his eternal purpose, the special periods of time, laid out before-hand, for their existence, (*περιστασεις καιρος*) and the boundaries of their several dwellings, in what nation soever their lot be cast.

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.

27 Now the great end for which God, in his wise and holy providence, thus gives them a being upon earth, according to the counsel of his own will, is that when, or wheresoever it be, they might enquire after him, in order to their knowing, loving, and serving him, and placing their happiness in him; and that notwithstanding all the blindness and depravity which besides what is natural in their present state have been wilfully contracted upon the human mind, they might try, at least, like persons groping in the dark, whether they might not possibly hit upon some discoveries of his eternal power and Godhead, by means of the visible things, which he has made, though he himself be an invisible Spirit, and an unknown God to *Athenian* wise-men: And yet such is his omnipresence, and perpetual agency in all places, that he is intimately near to every one of us, to observe, uphold, protect, and supply us, and to approve or disapprove of our behaviour, in thought, word, and deed.

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

28 For in him, as every where present, all-powerful and active, wise and good, and as the source of all vital influence, we possess our lives, from first to last, even by the uninterrupted emanations and course of his effective and governing providence, who is our life, and the length of our days: In him, after the same ineffable manner, we have all our power and activity of motion in soul and body, whereby we are enabled to think and act in our state of living existence: And in him, as the Creator and Preserver of all, we have the being, which we at first received, and still continue to enjoy, with all its supports and comforts, endowments and advantages of the rational and animal kind, whereby it is distinguished from creatures of lower rank: We owe all these to him, even as some of your own *Greek* poets have suggested; but not only *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and others of them, commonly called their *Jove* the *Father of men*; but *Aratus*, in one of his *hemisticks*, or half verses, says, *We are his offspring*, which intimates, that he made us for himself, and takes a tender care of us.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we

29 Since therefore (29) we derive our life and breath, motion and being, and our all, from this great God, who is the common Father, that created us all

ought not to think that the Colossian is like unto gold, or silver, or some graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

ter his own image; the Father of *spirits*, as well as the God of all *flesh*; we ought by no means to take up to low and false an idea of him, or put such a gross affront upon him, as to think, according to your vain imaginations, that the only true Deity bears any kind of resemblance to statues of silver, or gold, or stone, of human, or other shape, that are cut out or formed by the art, and devised by the fancy of men, how costly soever their materials, and exquisitely fine and curious their carvings and paintings be.

30 But, (*MAT. 27*) God has hitherto bore with, and in a manner connived at, and yet despised, this amazing stupidity and folly, amidst all the improvements of human learning; insomuch, that, on one hand, he, in his great long-suffering and patience, has refrained cutting you off, as he justly might have done, for all these idolatries, because, though very provoking, they are not so highly aggravated as *Israel's* were, who sinned against greater knowledge: And, on the other hand, he has not heretofore seen fit, in his infinitely wise, sovereign, and holy Providence, to send his prophets among you, to remonstrate against these abominations, but in his awful righteousness let you alone; because ye have willingly shut your eyes against such light as he had given you by tradition, and by the works of his hands: But now, in the riches of his own free mercy and grace, he, (*MARK. 16*) overlooking those days of ignorance and error, makes a clear revelation of himself and of a future judgment; (*VER. 31.*) and, wherever this revelation comes, he authoritatively requires all men, upon pain of his sorest displeasure, to change their minds and ways, and with contrition, shame, and sorrow of heart, under apprehensions of his endearing goodness, to turn, without delay, from all their idols, and from all their other iniquities to him, through that Jesus, the great and only Mediator, whom I preach. (*VER. 18.*)

31 For the God who made and rules over them, and to whom they are all accountable, has, in his own eternal counsels, fixed a certain and solemn time, in which, as he has declared by the gospel, he will summon all the inhabitants of this world to appear, in a future state, before his strict and awful tribunal, from whence there is no appeal; and will pass a decisive sentence of happiness or misery, for eternity, upon every one of them, according to rules of impartial righteousness: This he will do, not indeed immediately by himself, but mediately by his own Son, who, though a divine person, is in a wonderful manner truly man, having really taken our nature into a personal union with himself on earth, and carried it to heaven;

and whom God his Father has anointed, in that nature, to sustain the character, and do the work of the sovereign Judge of the whole race of mankind: And he has given the utmost proof and evidence of this to induce the belief of it in all men that hear our gospel concerning him; in that, as it declares, and many of his disciples are witnesses, God has actually raised him from the dead, in testimony of his owning, accepting, and enthroning him, after he had been crucified to make expiation for the sins of *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

32 And as the apostle was thus leading the company on to the doctrine of a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, some of the *Epicurean* philosophers, especially, (*ver. 18.*) upon hearing him mention the *resurrection of the dead*, which was contrary to all their principles, ridiculed and laughed at him for it as a whimsical notion of what they took to be an impossibility: But others, particularly those of the *Stoick* sect, who had some confused apprehensions of a future state of rewards and punishments for souls, but never thought of the resurrection of the body, said with a graver air, We should be glad to hear you again more distinctly, and at large, about a doctrine so novel, but, if true, so important, as this of the body's rising from the dead.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

33 And so the assembly broke up, divided in their sentiments about these matters, which *Paul* had discoursed on with little effect, as to most of them; and leaving what he had said to their consideration, and the blessing of God, he went out of court.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

34 But (as) though the generality of these learned philosophers and senators, being left to the ignorance, pride, and perverseness of their own hearts, rejected his testimony; yet, through grace, it was altogether ineffectual: For there were a few that followed him with great affection, and desire to be brought still further into the gospel; and that received *Jesus Christ* by faith, trusting in him, and in God through him, whom he has ordained to be the Saviour of all that believe, and the Judge of the whole world: Among these were two persons of eminence; one was the learned *Dionysius*, a member of this supreme court of judicature that sat at *Areopagus*; and the other was a woman of considerable rank, whose name was *Damaris*; and there were several others of less note, who, together with these, turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even *Jesus*, who delivered us from the wrath to come. (*1 Thess. i. 9, 10.*)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How excellent is the preaching of a crucified risen Jesus in a scriptural way, as deriving light from the Old and New Testament, to explain, confirm, and apply every doctrine concerning him! And yet how necessary is it, that principles of natural religion be established, with regard to the being, perfections, and providence of God, and a future judgment, to make way for the peculiar and distinguished truths of the gospel! Ah! how are the poor heathens to be pitied: And how would it move the spirit of a good man, to reflect on the blindness and corruption, in religious concerns, even of the most learned of them! They ignorantly worship an unknown god, set up innumerable idols of their own inventing, and stupidly imagine that their gods are confined to their temples, statues, and altars; that they are pleased with the works of men's hands; and that the Deity is like their carved images of gold, silver, and stone; and, at best, they do but grope in the dark after him, if possibly they might find him: But how different is the only living and true God, from all their gross conceptions of him; and what a noble and exalted representation have the scriptures given of him! There we are assured, with the clearest evidence, that he is the God who made and governs the world, and all things therein; who is always intimately near to us, wherever we are; has no need of any of us, and cannot be profited by us; but who himself gives life, and breath, and all good things: So that we are his offspring, that live, move, and have our beings in him, who has fore-appointed the times of our coming into, and continuing in the world, and the particular places of our residence in it, and will summon all mankind to a righteous judgment by his Son Jesus Christ, that glorious and divine Man, whom he has ordained to have the entire management of it, at his own prefixed day. How solemn are these thoughts! And what strong inducements to repent, and turn to God from all our iniquities, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of them, that we may find our Judge our friend, when we must appear before him! Happy and truly noble souls are they that receive the word, which acquaints us with these important things, with all readiness of mind, and daily search the scriptures, the only rule of faith, to see whether what any one says about them be agreeable to it, or not! Multitudes of such religious inquirers are effectually wrought upon to believe in Christ; and the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of others that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, before. And O how sovereign and victorious is the grace which makes the word effectual to all sorts of persons, to great numbers of the common people, and honourable women even a few, to devout worshippers, and idolatrous Gentiles, and to a learned Areopagite, and a famous Damaris, as well as to people of less note! So that neither great men, nor ladies of the highest quality, need be ashamed to own and believe in Christ, and receive the faithful saying of salvation alone by him, which is worthy of all acceptance: And surely none but the baser sort of men, or men of sensuality, pleasure, and trifling curiosity, that spend their time in telling and hearing some new thing to amuse them; or the men of pride, prejudice, and error, through false philosophy and vain deceit, can find in their hearts to run down the glorious gospel of the blessed God. But from such as these, who are indeed the devil's zealous, the servants of Christ must expect the bitterest enmity, scoffs, and persecutions, under pretence of their preaching strange and mysterious doctrines, and of their turning the world upside down, while they do this only in the best sense, to reform it, and their enemies do it in the worst, to throw it into confusion, and set the people in an uproar against they know not what. But they that believe, through grace, and know the truth as it is in Jesus, will cleave to his faithful messengers, and concern themselves for their safety and comfort; and, which is best of all, God himself will own and succeed them, for bringing many souls to Christ, and to heaven, through him.

C H A P. XVIII.

Paul goes from Athens to Corinth, works at his secular trade, and preaches first to the Jews, and then to the idolatrous Gentiles, 1,—6. His success, and his encouragement by a vision to continue there, 7,—11. His accusation by the Jews to Gallio, the Roman governor, who refuses to intermeddle in their affairs, 12,—17. His progress afterwards to Ephesus and Antioch, from whence he sets out on his third apostolic journey through several countries in his way to Jerusalem, 18,—23. Apollos, preaching the baptism of John at Ephesus, is further instructed by Aquila and Priscilla; and, going from thence to Achaia, preaches Christ to the Jews with scriptural evidence, 24,—28.

TEXT.

AFTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the things before-mentioned, the apostle Paul took his leave of Athens, as finding that little success was to be expected there; and went to the renowned city of Achaia, which was called Corinth, from one Corinthus, who rebuilt it, a city famous for trade and learning, riches and luxury. (See the note on 1 Cor. iv. 8, 10.)

2 And there he met with a certain converted Jew, (ver. 26.) a native of Pontus, in the province of Asia the less, whose name was Aquila, and who, together with Priscilla, his wife and fellow-Christian, had removed their habitation thither from Italy; being obliged to flee that country, where they had lately dwelt, by a severe edict of the emperor, Claudius Caesar, who was a timorous and jealous prince, and had by his own authority banished all the Jews from Rome, the capital city of Italy, and of the whole empire, under pretence that they were a seditious sort of people. The apostle being acquainted with the religious character of this excellent pair, went and applied himself to them.

3 And as he had but a few friends in that strange place, and was unwilling to be burdensome to them, or to give his captious enemies an opportunity of reproaching him, as though he preached the gospel for secular advantage; and as, according to the Jewish custom of bringing up their youth of all ranks to some manual employment, he, though bred a scholar, had learnt Aquila's and Priscilla's trade, which was to make tents of cloth, or of skins, for soldiers, shepherds, and others, who in hot seasons lived much abroad; so he took up his lodging at their house, and laboured with his own hands in that business to earn his livelihood, though he had a just claim to a comfortable

4 And he res-
ided in the syna-
gogue every Sab-
bath, and persua-
ded the Jews and
the Greeks.

comfortable maintenance from those to whom he mi-
nistrated in sacred things. (1 Cor. ix. 4,—18.)

4 But, (2d) on every returning Sabbath, when
the *Jews* * and *profelytes of the gate* used to meet in
the synagogue, the apostle, according to his custom
of beginning *first* with them, went to their religious
assemblies, and publicly preached the gospel to them,
confirming what he said with proper arguments, and
answering objections against it; and then, having in-
formed their judgment, he addressed himself to their
consciences and affections, entreating both *Jews* and
profelytes, in the most pathetic, tender, and moving
manner, not to neglect so great salvation, as ever
they would answer it to God, and escape his dread-
ful wrath another day: And by these means, as God's
ordinance, which he owned and made effectual, some
of them were prevailed upon to believe in the Lord
Jesus Christ.

5 And when Si-
lar and Timotheus
came from Berea
in Macedonia, Paul
was pressed in spi-
rit, and testified to
the Jews, that Je-
sus was Christ.

5 And when both *Silar* and *Timothy* were come
to the apostle from *Berea* in *Macedonia*, where he
had left them †, with orders to follow him as soon as
possible; (*chap. xvii. 13, 14, 15.*) and when, upon
their arrival, he had not only the comfort of their
joint company and assistance, but likewise received
joyful tidings of the continuance and progress of the
good work, that had been begun in churches planted
by him; he, through a warm impression of the Holy
Spirit, (*ἐκίνητος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*) was more than ever
grieved at heart for the obstinacy and unbelief of the
generality of the *Jews* at *Corinth*; and was more than
ever solicitous in his own mind about, and desirous
still further to attempt their conversion; the love of
Christ, and compassion to their souls, constraining
him: And as now, by the concurrence of his com-
panions and assistants, what he should say would be
established in the mouth of two or three witnesses,
he,

N O T E S.

* Though these *Greeks* are not called
Jews, or *worshipping Greeks*, as in
chap. xvii. 4; yet it is plain that they
were *profelytes of the gate*, because they
met with the *Jews* in their syna-
gogue-worship every Sabbath-day; and
Silar, who doubtless was one of them,
mentioned under that character, ver.
5, where he is spoken of as a *worshipper*
of God, (*εὐλαβούμενος τὸν Θεόν*) which is
a usual description of a *profelyte* of the
gate. See the note on *chap. xiii. 43*.

† *Silar* seems to have said a consider-
able time at *Berea* after these orders, the
necessity of affairs there requiring it:

But *Timothy* had come to the apostle
while he was at *Athens*, and been sent
by him from thence to *Thessalonica*, to
establish and comfort the Christians un-
der their difficulties and dangers there,
as we find 1 *Thess. iii. 1,—5.*; which e-
pistle was wrote during the apostle's abo-
dode at *Corinth*. But now, at length,
both *Silar* and *Timothy* came to the a-
postle at *Corinth*, when *Timothy* gave
him such an account of the faith and love
of the *Thessalonians*, as was to his abun-
dant joy, 1 *Thess. iii. 6,—10.*; and, proba-
bly, *Silar* brought him comfortable
tidings of the good state of things at *Be-
rea*, since the apostle left that city.

he, with the greater freedom and encouragement, asserted in the strongest terms, and plainly proved to the *Jews*, from their own scriptures, that the Lord Jesus, whom their countrymen had shamefully crucified, but God the Father had honourably owned in raising him from the dead, is that very promised Messiah whom they had been expecting to come.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the *Gentiles*.

6 But (δε) when, upon finding themselves unable to answer his arguments, and the spirit by which he spake, they had recourse to rage and revilings, and (ἀντιτακόμενοι) setting themselves, as it were, in battle-array against him, maliciously contradicted, and spoke reproachfully of him and of his doctrine, even to the blaspheming of the name of Christ, whom he preached to them; he thereupon shook the dust off from his upper garment, in token of his own holy grief and indignation, and of God's abhorring and casting them off, for their perverse infidelity; and said unto them, The guilt of your sins, and the ruin of your souls rest entirely upon your own heads*, as ye have wilfully brought them upon yourselves, while I have given you fair warning, and done all, that duty and charity required, to reclaim you, and so stand clear of your blood: (*Ezek. xxxiii. 4, 9.*) From this time forward I will take no more pains with you in this synagogue; but turning to the *idolatrous*, as well as devout *Gentiles*, will preach the glad tidings of salvation to them, (see the note on *chap. xiii. 46.*) in hopes that they may give it better entertainment; and if any of you be offended at this, while ye perish in, and for your own desperate unbelief, ye may thank yourselves.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the

7 Then, to exasperate them as little as possible, and to ingratiate himself with the *Gentiles*, and at the same time to give the *Jews* further opportunities to come and hear him still, if they pleased, he went from their assembly to, and preached in, the house of one *Justus* by name†, who, being a proselyte of the gate, worshipped the only true God of *Israel*, and whose house stood very near the synagogue; so that those, who were so disposed, might easily step into it, as they went to or from their own place of worship.

8 And though the apostle had but little success among the generality of the *Jews*, and many of them treated

N O T E S.

* Their blood being upon their own heads, intimates, that their guilt should be charged upon them; and seems to allude to the rite of laying hands on the heads of sacrifices, in token of the offerer's guilt and punishment being laid upon them, *Exod. xxix. 10.* and *Lev. i. 4.*

† It is uncertain whether the apostle removed his lodging from *Aquila's* house to that of *Justus*; or whether he only used this house for preaching to the people.

the synagogue, be-
lieved on the Lord
with all his house:
and many of the
Corinthians, hear-
ing, believed, and
were baptized.

treated him in a most unworthy and opprobrious man-
ner; yet his labour was far from being in vain: For
even the chief man of the *Jews* there, *Crispus* by
name, the president of the synagogue, (see the note
on *Matth. ix. 18.*) believed on the Lord Jesus Christ
as the only Saviour; and his whole family were
brought over to the faith, and into God's gracious
covenant, and were baptized, together with himself:
(1 *Cor. i. 14.*) And a good number of the *Corinthian*
people, *idolatrous Gentiles*, as well as others, in like
manner, upon hearing the gospel preached to them,
believed, and were baptized, and so came under all
the privileges and obligations of the household of faith.

Then spake the
Lord to Paul in the
night by a vision,
not afraid, but
steadfast and hold not
your peace:

9 The unbelieving *Jews* being still more and more
enraged at these things, infomuch that *Paul* began
to think, that God had no more work to do by him,
at present, in this city, and that it was high time for
him to flee for his own safety, and carry the gospel
to some other parts: Then, to direct and encourage
him, the Lord Jesus appeared to him one night in a
divine vision, and spake to him, to prevent his leav-
ing the work begun, and his fainting under the diffi-
culties and dangers he met with there, saying, with
all the grace and majesty of a God, See that you be
not discouraged at the terror of your enemies, nor a-
fraid of their faces; but go on to preach the word
with all plainness and boldness; be instant in season
and out of season; and let none of their menaces or
malicious treatment dishearten you, or put you to si-
lence.

For I am
with thee, and no
man shall set on
thee, to hurt thee:
For I have much
people in this city.

10 For as none can go one step further in their
mischievous designs than they are permitted from a-
bove; so I am, and will be with you, by my sup-
porting and protecting, conducting, comforting and
efficacious presence, to preserve, own, and abundant-
ly succeed you in your work; and if I am for you,
who can be against you? Not one of your adversaries,
be they ever so inveterate or powerful, shall be suf-
fered to lay violent hands upon you, to beat or im-
prison you, as they have in other places: No, nor
to do any injury to your person, or stop your mouth:
For, besides those that are already called*, I have
still many more chosen people, who are given to me
of the Father, as my special property, care and
charge, whose names are written in my book of life
from the foundation of the world, whom I have re-
deemed

N O T E

* There were as yet but few converts and therefore I take the *much people* to
be *Corinthians*, compared with what were relate rather to them that should be ef-
fectually made in the following year sectually called afterwards, than to those
and half of the apostle's ministry there; that already were so.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat.

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

deemed by my blood, and must bring home to myself, by means of your ministry, even in this vicious and profane *Gentile* city. (1 Cor. vi. 9.—11.)

11 The apostle having received this encouragement and divine admonition from Christ himself, (*see*) sat down with a cheerful resolution to stand the brunt how hot soever it might be, and to persist in the Lord's work: Accordingly he staid a year and half in that city, dispensing the word of God's grace among them, with great zeal and labour, for the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, and with eminent success, till a large church was gathered and settled there; for a *great door and effectual* was opened to him, though there were many adversaries, as afterwards said of another place. (1 Cor. xvi. 9.)

12, 13 During this time, while Gallio, elder brother to Seneca, the famous heathen moralist, was proconsul of the province of Achaia, (*see* the note on chap. xiii. 7.) a great multitude of the Jews rose tumultuously upon Paul, as with one consent, and hurried him away to that magistrate's tribunal, crying out against him, as though he had been a most dangerous incendiary, saying, This pernicious detestable wretch, though a Jew, makes it his business to preach up the doctrine of Jesus, and preach down the religion of our ancestors; and so to excite and encourage the people to worship God in a manner directly contrary to our divine law, which was anciently settled by Moses, and which we are allowed to observe by the edicts of the Roman emperor himself.

14 And when the apostle Paul was going to plead his own cause, and shew the injustice and malice of their accusation, since in reality he only preached Christ, and salvation to persons of all nations through him, according to what had been foretold in the law and the prophets; Gallio, understanding that it was merely a religious affair, stopt him short*; and turning to the Jews, said, If the matter, for which ye have in a riotous manner accused this person, were really some unrighteous thing against the law of property, and of the civil government; or if it were iniquity

N O T E.

* Seneca gave a great character of his brother Gallio for his ingenuity and sincerity, and for his sweet, generous, and sedate temper; and he indeed appears to have been a very just and prudent magistrate, who judged well of the rights of civil government, and of the power of his office, and discountenanced civil punishments on religious accounts. (*See* Dr. Lardner's *credibility of the gospel history*, Vol. I. p. 47, 349, 354, and 408.)

But he shewed too much unconcern about his own being acquainted with those important things, which he lightly spoke of, though with possible views, as a *question of words and names*, and of the Jewish law, ver. 15, and too negligent of restraining the injuries that were offered to *Sophists*, ver. 19, who, by Gallio's own principles, was an innocent man.

iniquitous facts, such as rebellion, robbery, or murder, or any other crime that lies under my cognizance, as a civil magistrate, there might indeed be some reason for me to overlook your disorderly and clamorous way of bringing him before me; and it would, by all means, be proper for me patiently to hear whatever ye have to say against him, in order to my judging of the true merits of the cause.

15 But if, as I perceive, it relates only to points in debate between yourselves, about religious opinions and practices, and what names shall be given to the person whom *Paul* preaches, whether he shall be called the *Christ* or the *Messiah*, or not; and what your law of *Moses* says, about the privileges of the *Gentiles*, and their obligation to worship the God of *Israel* in your way; even adjust these things among yourselves, and do not trouble me with them: For I am resolved not to intermeddle with such affairs, to hear and try, and pass judgment upon them; they being foreign to my office, and not coming under my jurisdiction, as a *Roman* governor; and, as far as I see, one sect of you has as much right as another to propagate its own notions, provided it be without disturbing the public peace, which is most of all endangered by your tumultuous proceedings against this man.

16 And with a good deal of sternness and resentment in his words and countenance, he ordered his officers to put them out of court; and commanded them to depart, and behave peaceably for time to come, that neither he, nor the community, might have any further occasion to complain of them; and so, according to *Christ's* promise to *Paul*, (ver. 10.) no man was suffered to hurt him.

17 But (d) the multitude of the unbelieving *Greek*s, then present, being utter enemies to Christianity, were so provoked at *Gallio's* favouring *Paul*, and driving the *Jews* out of court because of their opposition to him, that, to shew their resentment, they, under *Jewish* influence, insolently and outrageously seized upon *Sosthenes**, the president of the synagogue,

G g 2

N O T E.

* Various are the opinions about *Sosthenes*. Some suppose him to have been the chief ruler of the synagogue, in the room of *Crispus*, when he turned Christian, (ver. 8.) or that he had been before him, and still was known by his character; others, that he was chief ruler of another synagogue at *Corinth*; and others, that he was *Crispus*, who, having two names, is here called *Sosthenes*. Accordingly some take him to

have been an unconverted *Jew*, and a ring leader in this affair; and others, a Christian, or at least a friend of *Paul*, as I am inclined to think he was: For if, as is highly probable, this was the same *Sosthenes*, whom the apostle calls his brother, 1 Cor. i. 1. it is certain that he was either now, or afterwards a Christian; and it seems to me, as if the *Jews*, being restrained from meddling with *Paul*, the *Greeks*, at their instigation, as they

none of those things.

gogue, and a friend of *Paul's*, and beat him severely even before the face of the governor, while he was sitting on the bench: And *Gallio*, not knowing what might be the consequence were he to interpose, took no notice of either this affront to himself, or of their abusing an innocent man, choosing rather to wink at, and give way to the present fury, than to attempt to suppress it, and embroil himself in their religious quarrels.

18 And *Paul* after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him *Priscilla* and *Aquila*; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he

18 *Paul*, after all this bustle, continued at *Corinth*, under the protection and countenance of the governor, for a considerable time longer*, God having still more work for him to do at that place; and then he took a solemn farewell of the disciples that had been converted there, with Christian salutations, exhortations, and prayers; and went a ship-board from thence to the province of Syria, in company with *Priscilla* and *Aquila*, he having shorn his head at *Cenchrea*, a sea-port of the *Isthmus* near *Corinth*. For in condescension to the Jews, that he might gain some of them, (1 Cor. ix. 20.) || he had taken a voluntary vow of *Nazaritism* upon himself for a time, at the expiration of which his head was to be shaved, according to the law. (Numb. vi. 1.—21.)

19 In this voyage he came to *Ephesus*, the chief city of the *Proconsular Asia*; and there he left *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, those experienced and knowing Christians.

NOTES.

they were going out of court, fell upon *Sosthenes*, *Paul's* friend, to intimidate the governor, and provoke him to do something against the Christians, and to gratify the Jews, in like manner as the Jews dealt with *Pilate*, to bring him into their measures against our blessed Lord.

* His tarrying there yet a good while, seems to relate to the time he staid at *Corinth*, after the expiration of the year and six months, mentioned ver. 11.; and some suppose it was about half a year more.

† *Aquila* is mentioned ver. 2. and 26. before *Priscilla*; but here, and in *Rom.* xvi. 3. and 1 *Tim.* iv. 19. she is put first, to shew that, in *Christ Jesus*, there is neither male nor female; and, perhaps, because she was first converted, or was the most zealous Christian of the two. However, this shews how little dependence can be had on the popish argument for *Peter's* supremacy, because his name is ordinarily mentioned before the other apostles, though *Andrew* stands before him in *John* i. 44.

‡ Those that lived at such a distance from the temple, that they could not

reach it by the time their vow was expired, might shave their heads at what place soever they found themselves; at which time they set aside the price of their sacrifice, in order to bring or send it to the temple by the next opportunity. *Universal history*, Vol. I. p. 632. and *Grot.* in loc. But some think that *Paul* did not actually perform this service, in the journey he was now taking to *Jerusalem*, where his stay was very short, ver. 21, 22. while others suppose that this was one motive to the journey itself.

|| As the *Nazarite's* vow included a moral obligation to purity, and self-dedication to God, it was, at least, as lawful for the apostle to use the ceremonial rites that attended it, as any others of the *Mosaic* law, when the circumstances of things made it expedient, 1 Cor. vi. 12. (See the notes on chap. xvi. 3. and xviii. 24.) But *Grotius*, *Hammond*, and some others, suppose, that it was *Aquila*, and not *Paul*, that had shorn his head; and by the construction it may be applied to either of them, by leaving out, or placing the point after *Aquila*.

himself entered
the synagogue,
and reasoned with
the Jews.

Christians, to instil evangelical principles in private conversation, (*ver.* 26.) as they might have opportunity: But being still willing, according to his custom, to preach Christ first to the Jews, wherever he found them, he himself went into their synagogue at *Ephesus* before he departed, and gave them a sermon publicly upon the important doctrines of the gospel.

20 When they
desired him to tar-
ry longer time with
them, he consented
not:

20 *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, being desirous of still more of his company and services, entreated him to continue with them a little longer; however, for special important reasons, which he acquainted them with, (*ver.* 21.) he could not tell how to comply with their request.

21 But bade
them farewell, say-
ing, I must by all
means keep this
feast that cometh
to Jerusalem: but
I will return again
unto you, if God
will. And he sail-
ed from *Ephesus*.

21 But he took his leave of them in an engaging Christian manner; and to excuse his not staying any longer with them, at present, he said, I must needs attend the approaching passover, which is by way of eminence called the feast, at *Jerusalem*; not that I think myself obliged in conscience to observe it, but that I may at once consult my brethren and salute the church there, (*ver.* 22.) and may take that opportunity of general concourse to try again what may yet be done by the blessing of God, for winning over Jews and religious profelytes to Christ, and taking off their prejudices against me and the gospel: But as my heart is with you, and is much set upon helping forward the good work, of which, through grace, there seem to be some hopeful beginnings here, I faithfully promise, God willing, to take the very first opportunity of returning to you, that I may more fully communicate the gospel of Christ, in humble dependence that he will make it his power to the salvation of many souls: And having given them this assurance to quiet and encourage them, he went aboard again, and sailed away from *Ephesus*.

22 And when he
had landed at Ce-
sarea, and gone up,
and saluted the
church, he went
down to Antioch.

22 And arriving by a direct course at *Cæsarea* in *Palestine*, which was the most common and commodious port to land at in his way to *Jerusalem*, he went ashore; and going up from thence to *Jerusalem*, he saluted the church there*, in the most affectionate expressions of his brotherly regard to them, asking how the work of the Lord prospered among them, and

N O T E.

* That the church here meant was that at *Jerusalem*, which might be called by way of eminence the church, on account of its being the mother-church of believers under the gospel state, is sufficiently evident, because going up, and going down, is the usual stile for persons going to and from *Jerusalem*; and be-

cause we have otherwise no account of the apostle's journey thither, where he had said, he must needs be at the next feast; (*ver.* 21.) and not long after he had finished this journey, he, according to his promise, *ver.* 21. went again to *Ephesus*, as appears from chap. xix. 1. See Dr. *Whitby's* note.

and telling them what great things God had done by his ministry, among the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*. And then, having answered the end of his journey thither, and found that no remarkable door was opened for any further service there, he soon left that city, and went down from thence to *Antioch* in *Syria*, to visit the famous church there, by which he was sent forth, in a solemn and public manner, to preach the gospel to the *Gentiles*, (chap. xiii. 1, &c.) and from which he had set out on this last expedition, (chap. xv. 40, 41.) and so he finished his second apostolic journey.

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

23 And when he had spent some time with these his old Christian friends and brethren, in rehearsing the praises of the Lord, and inquiring into the state of their affairs, and in conferring with them, to their mutual comfort and edification in love, he, taking his leave of them, set out a third time for another progress, and travelled through the provinces of *Galatia* and *Phrygia*; and taking every place in its course, (*καθεξής*) as it lay in his way, he gave such instructions and exhortations, as were suited and blessed of God, to encourage and strengthen the hearts of all the converts, that had been made in his last journey, (chap. xvi. 5, 6.) and to promote their faith, hope, and patience in the profession of the gospel.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

24 Now (*ὁ*) after the apostle was gone from Ephesus, (ver. 19.) there came thither a certain Jew, Apollos by name, who was a native of Alexandria in Egypt, which abounded with Jews; and he was (*λογιος*) an ingenious learned young man, exceeding fluent in speech, and expert in the knowledge and use of the Old Testament-scriptures, not only by means of his education and study, but also by a superior influence of the Spirit, which discovered itself with great power in his discourses.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

25 This admirably accomplished youth had been initiated, like a catechumen, (*κατηχουμενος*) in some principles of the doctrine of Christ, and of salvation by him; and his heart being warmly impressed with these things, and filled with a fervent zeal for the glory of God, and the good of souls, he, (*ακρίβει*) with a great deal of accuracy, study, and pains, discoursed and preached concerning Christ and his kingdom, according to the best of his light, which indeed was but small and obscure, comparatively speaking.

N O T E.

* It is very probable that Apollos returned to live at Alexandria soon after he had been baptized with John's baptism; and so had no opportunity of being

explicitly acquainted with the doctrine of the gospel, as delivered by Christ and his apostles, till he came to Ephesus, where he was taught them by these hospitable and eminent

he being acquainted with only so much of these doctrines, as *John the Baptist* had taught, and signified by his baptism, relating to repentance, and faith in the then approaching Messiah, for the remission of sins, who would baptize the believers in him with the Holy Ghost.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Whom when *Aquila* and *Priscilla* had heard, they took him unto them, and expended unto him the way of God more perfectly.

26 And upon his arrival at *Ephesus*, he began to preach this doctrine publicly, and with great freedom and courage (*παρρησιασθεως*) to the Jews in their synagogue: But (*ακουσας δε*) when *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, who were more enlightened, experienced, and grown Christians, heard him, and perceived that, though he aimed well, and was an exceedingly promising youth, yet wanted still further insight into the gospel-dispensation, they took him to their own lodging; where they treated him with great tenderness and affection, and, according to their ability, talked very seriously and closely with him in private conversation, and led him into a still more accurate, (*εξυσσεργας*) clear, and extensive view of God's way of salvation, through faith in a crucified, risen, and exalted Redeemer, as it was now further revealed to, and by his holy apostles: And *Apollos*, though a good scholar, and popular preacher, was so far from disdaining these instructions of poor mechanics, that he with all humbleness of mind readily hearkened to their discourse, and cheerfully received the truth in the love of it, as a rich improvement of the slight and confused knowledge he had before, of these important points.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

27 And when, for his own and others further edification, he was inclined to travel into the province of *Achaia*, that he might converse with other Christians and ministers, and preach the gospel there, and particularly at *Corinth*, (chap. xix. 1.) one of its chief cities, then *Aquila* and the rest of the believers, the brethren in Christ at *Ephesus*, wrote letters of recommendation to the disciples in those parts, earnestly entreating them to receive and encourage him, as a sound and able, faithful and zealous servant of the Lord Jesus; who, when he came among them, was, by the blessing of God, eminently useful to those, that had before received Christ by faith, through the free and effectual operations of divine grace upon their hearts, in further enlightening, comforting, and establishing them, and in nobly defending the main articles of Christianity against the attacks of their adversaries;

NOTE.

eminent Christians, *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, who, in all likelihood, lodged him in their own house, that they might the more familiarly and fully converse with him about them, ver. 26.

faries; and so watered what the apostle *Paul* had planted in that church. (ver. 8. compared with 1 Cor. iii. 6.)

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.

28 For *Apollos*, with great judgment, earnestness and power, reasoned with the Jews in their public assemblies before all the people, confuting their objections, and plainly demonstrating from Old Testament prophecies, which he was familiarly acquainted with (ver. 24.) that Jesus was indeed the promised, and only true Messiah, whom *John the Baptist* told them of, and they themselves had been expecting.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What an excellent spirit is it in gospel-ministers, not to seek their own things, but even to give up their just and reasonable claims of maintenance from the people, and labour with their own hands for a livelihood, when the necessity of affairs requires it! What need have they of wisdom from above, to know when, and how far, it may be expedient for them to condescend to the infirmities of the weak and prejudiced, for their good, in things that are not in themselves sinful! And what pains should they take to promoting the knowledge of Christ, as the only Saviour, in persuading all sorts of sinners to accept of him; in confirming the churches, and saluting them with all affection in the Lord; and in defending the great truths of the gospel against all its adversaries, till they shew themselves to be incorrigibly wicked and obstinate in rejecting it! Such bring the heaviest destruction upon their own heads, while faithful ministers stand clear of their blood. But how much sorer multitudes may despise the gospel to their own perdition, God will make it effectual to others, and among them to some who, like *Corinthian* sinners, and chief rulers of synagogues, were most unlikely to receive it: He orders the stations of his servants, and sends them to one place and another, according to the good pleasure of his will, wherever he has a design of grace upon a chosen people to bring them into Christ; and if God be with them, who can be against them? Great success shall crown their labours; and civil magistrates, though they have no sense of religion themselves, shall favour their righteous cause, and not be suffered to go beyond the proper sphere of their office, in taking cognizance of religious differences, any further than the way of managing them may disturb the public peace, and may call for protection to the innocent and injured, which ought to have been afforded to *Sosthenes*, as well as *Paul*. But how insolent and outrageous is a spirit of bigotry, which not only sets itself against the preachers and professors of Christ, but likewise against such just and prudent rulers, as discountenance its schemes of suppressing them! How opportunely doth the Lord himself often appear for his cause and interest! And how ready should enlightened Christians be to do what in them lies, with all tenderness, privacy, and love, to instruct such hopeless, serious, and zealous young ministers, as have good talents and mean well, instead of despising, ridiculing, and exposing them, because they have not so clear notions of the gospel, as might be wished for! And how kindly should such young men accept of their friendly admonitions, though they may be in station, learning, and natural parts, much inferior to themselves! If they are modest, humble, and teachable, like *Apollos*, they may at length be exceeding useful to the churches, and deserve the highest recommendations to them; and, being mighty in the scriptures, how signally serviceable may they be for maintaining the truths of the gospel, confuting errors, and helping them that have believed through grace, who yet still need the ministrations of Christ's servants, as means of his appointment and blessing, for their furtherance and joy of faith!

C H A P. XIX.

Paul returns to Ephesus, and imparts the Holy Ghost to some that had known only John's baptism, 1,—7. Preaches the gospel three months in the synagogue, where meeting with great opposition, he removes to the school of Tyrannus, and preaches there two years, confirming his doctrine by miracles, 8,—12. Some Jewish exorcists that made use of Christ's name are confounded, and others of them converted, 13,—20. Paul purposes to go through Macedonia and Achaia, to Jerusalem and Rome, but defers it for some time, 21, 22. The silversmiths raise a mob to cry up Diana of the Ephesians, in opposition to him, 23,—34. But the town-clerk disperses and appeases them, 35,—41.

TEXT.

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW while Apollos was labouring with great zeal at Corinth, to which city of Achaia he went, according to his desire, (chap. xviii. 27.) the apostle Paul having passed through Galatia and Phrygia, (chap. xviii. 23.) known by the name of the upper parts of Asia the Less, returned, according to his promise, (chap. xviii. 21.) to Ephesus; and there meeting with about twelve persons, (ver. 7.) that believed in Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, he said to them, Have ye received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, together with his gracious, sanctifying, and comforting influences, since ye embraced the faith of Christ? To this question they answered *, We are so great strangers to the state of the Messiah's kingdom, that we have not so much as heard that the Holy Spirit has ever worked, under this new dispensation, in an extraordinary manner upon any persons whatsoever †; or that he has ever yet returned as a spirit of prophecy, since he withdrew from the church of Israel many ages ago.

3 Hereupon

NOTES.

* These probably were either converts under John's ministry, that had left Judea before the effusion of the Spirit on the famous day of Pentecost, and had ever since lived in some obscure distant parts of Asia the Less; or had been travelling about in places, where the gospel had not been preached; or they were converted by Apollos's ministry, while he knew only the baptism of John, and was not perfectly acquainted with the way of the Lord, till he came to Ephesus, from whence, soon after he had received more light, he went to Achaia. (Chap. xviii. 24,—27.) On either of these suppositions, it is no wonder, that they had heard nothing of the effusion of

the Spirit, especially if we consider, that, when Paul was at Ephesus before, his stay was very short, and seemed to have only awakened some, so far as to give promising hopes, that they might be brought to the knowledge of Christ.

† These disciples, who had been baptized with John's baptism, could not be ignorant whether there were any such thing as the Holy Ghost; because John himself not only spoke of the Spirit's descending on Christ, but likewise of Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost. Matth. iii. 11. and John i. 33. But they had never heard, that this was actually come to pass, in any extraordinary effusion of his gifts, together with his graces.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

3 Hereupon the apostle said to them, What! not heard of the great effusion of the Holy Spirit from the crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour! Into what dispensation then, and to the sealing of what doctrine, and of your holy profession of it, were ye baptized? They replied again, We have been only partakers of John's baptism, for the purposes for which he administered it, with a reference to the approaching Messiah, who he said, and we believed, was then very soon to appear.

4 Then Paul, to lead them into the knowledge of Christ, said, The preaching, together with the baptism, of John was indeed, (*μὴν*) to call and oblige his disciples to repent of their sins, upon encouragements taken from the abundant grace of the gospel-kingdom, which was then just at hand; he telling them that it was their duty and interest, as ever they would escape the wrath to come, to believe in him, who would very soon appear in his public character after himself; by which John meant, that they should believe in Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour, whom God has anointed to that office.

5 And (*αὐτὸν*) when the people, (*ver. 4.*) heard, and believed this welcome news of the near approach of the promised and expected Messiah, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, as that Messiah *

NOTE

* These words are taken by many to be *Luke's* and not *Paul's*: But I rather think them to be a continuation of the apostle's own words, which the historian recites to the end of this verse, and then goes on with the narrative of what followed on the apostle's discourse with them: For the most accurate grammatical construction of the words leads us thus to understand them; and several of the greatest critics, such as *Drusius*, *Beza*, and *Bachart*, tell us that the particle *αὐτὸν*, *ver. 5.* answers, as a redditive, to *μὴν*, *ver. 4.* and that a new sentence never begins, as it doth in this verse, with *καὶ* and a participle, where *μὴν* so immediately goes before it, as it doth here in *ver. 4.*: Nor can we be sure that any of John's disciples, much less all of them, were ever rebaptized with water, upon their believing in Christ as that Messiah, into the faith of whom their master had baptized them: For as our Lord did not order the eleven apostles to be themselves baptized under the gospel-dispensation, but only to baptize others; *Matth. xxviii. 19.* so it does not appear that they had any other baptism than that of John. The apostle Paul indeed was baptized

after his conversion; but he probably never was one of John's disciples. The same may be said of the three thousand that were baptized on the remarkable day of Pentecost, who seem to have been mostly *Jews*, that came from distant nations. And it appears to me, that there was no need of rebaptizing John's disciples, since both baptisms were for substance the same, and into the faith of the same divine person, only one was in the name of him, who was immediately to come, and the other of him, who was already come; and so when Jesus was believed and owned to be the true Messiah, the faith of such persons, together with the truth of the doctrine they professed, was signified and sealed by the baptism which preceded, as well as by that which followed his actual appearing. And unless these baptisms were the same for substance, ours must be essentially different from that which Christ himself received, since he was baptized only by John; and consequently the New Testament-church has not that communion with him in baptism, as the old Testament-church had in circumcision. But if after all, it should be supposed, that the difference between

and so were turned over, and devoted to him; who, in fact, did come immediately afterwards; and having finished the work of redemption, is now exalted, as Lord of all, at the Father's right hand, to baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost; according to the signification of *John's* baptizing them with water: (*Matth. iii. 11.*) And therefore whether ye had heard of the actual pouring out of the Spirit, or not, there was abundant reason for you to be looking and hoping for it.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.

6 And when *Paul* had instructed these disciples, (*ver. 1.*) after this manner, about the nature, obligation, and design of *John's* baptism, which pointed to Christ, and superseded any necessity of their being baptized again with water, he laid his hands upon them, as a signal of what Christ would do for them; and the Holy Ghost came down in a gracious and miraculous way upon them; so that they were baptized with the Spirit: And, by his extraordinary gift, they immediately spoke in different sorts of languages, which they had never learnt before; and, by divine suggestion, they explained and applied Old Testament-prophecies, and spoke of the glorious things, that are still more clearly revealed under the New Testament-dispensation: God hereby giving a plain and visible testimony to the gospel, in its first plantation at *Ephesus*, and at the same time thoroughly qualifying these converts, in an instant, for preaching it, wheresoever Providence might call them.

; And all the men were about twelve.

7 And the number of the men that were thus signally filled with the Holy Ghost, was about twelve, answerable to the number of the apostles on whom the Spirit descended, in like manner, at the feast of Pentecost. (*Chap. ii. 3, 4.* see the note there.)

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

8 Then (*2d*) *Paul*, being honoured with these incontestible credentials of a divine authority, which appeared in this effect of the laying on of his hands, went into the synagogue of the *Jews*, that he might, as usual, make the *first* offer of the gospel to them; and he preached publicly, with all freedom and holy boldness, as knowing what he affirmed, time after time,

NOTE

between baptizing in the name of the Messiah, as *to come*, and as *already come*, was so material, as to make it requisite that the same persons, upon their believing in Jesus, as the Messiah, whom *John* spoke of, should be baptized again; this is no argument for rebaptizing any one in after ages, in which no such difference can be pretended; much less is it so, if Mr. *Henry's* thought be admit-

ted, viz. That those persons were baptized, not by *John* himself, but in his name, by some of his weak disciples, who were zealous for their master's honour, and ignorantly baptized them into his doctrine, without looking any further. Besides the authors above-mentioned, see Dr. *Lightfoot's* harmony of the New Testament, Vol. I. p. 297, 298.

time, for about a quarter of a year; (*διαλογισαμενος*) reasoning with them, hearing and answering their objections, and earnestly entreating them, as they would value their own salvation, to embrace the great and glorious doctrines which he had published among them, pertaining to the kingdom of grace, which God, by his Son Jesus Christ, had set up in this world, and will maintain, till he shall advance its happy subjects to his kingdom of glory in the world to come.

9 But when, after this fair trial, some of them hardened their hearts against these important and concerning truths, and rejected them by unbelief, yea, and in the presence of all the people, spoke reproachfully and bitterly against Jesus himself, who is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, (John xiv. 6.) and against God's gracious method of salvation by him, which the apostle preached, and true believers owned and professed; he then turning away from those despisers and revilers, as incorrigible enemies, went out of their synagogue; and, taking the believers in Christ along with him, he separated them from the society and communion of those obstinate infidels; and repairing to the * public school of one whose name was *Tyrannus*, he there preached daily to the people, explaining, proving, and defending, or answering cavils and objections against the great doctrine of salvation, through a crucified and risen Redeemer.

10 And this he continued to do with indefatigable labour, great diligence, and wonderful success, for the space of about † two years together; so that vast multitudes of the *Lesser Asia*, who resorted on various occasions to this famous city, had not only opportunity of hearing, but many of them were brought to receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus, both *Jews and Gentiles*, the politer sort of which are signified by the name of *Greeks*.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul;

NOTES.

* Some suppose that this was a *divinity school* of the *Jews*; and others, that it was a *philosophical school* of the *Greeks*. But, be that as it will, here was liberty, which there was not in the synagogue, for all sorts of persons, even *Gentile idolators*, as well as others, to attend on the preaching of the gospel.

† These two years added to the three months, in which the apostle preached

in the synagogue, ver. 8. and the time he spent after all this at *Ephesus*, ver. 22. make up, in the whole, about three years of his abode there, according to the account he gave of it to the elders of the *Ephesian* church, chap. xx. 31. Or, as others think, it was three years from the time of his first coming to *Ephesus*, to the time of his taking his farewell of those brethren.

ture, and in a very uncommon way, by the ministration of *Paul*, who, as Christ's servant, did greater works than himself, in the manner of performing them, because he was gone to the Father. (See the note on *John* xiv. 12.)

12 So that not only the sick that were brought to the apostle, were cured; but handkerchiefs * or aprons, that had touched his body, were carried to diseased persons; and at this signal, though not from any virtue in the things themselves, they were instantly healed at a distance, whatever their distempers were; and, in like manner, such as were corporally possessed by wicked and malicious spirits, (see the note on *Matth.* iv. 24.) were relieved and delivered from them, which carried an intimation of the gracious design of the gospel, and of its efficacy, when attended with the power of the Holy Ghost, to heal spiritual maladies, and to set captive souls at liberty, from the power of sin and Satan.

13 This being observed with admiration and applause by the people, some strolling *Jews*, that went about as fortune-tellers, and pretended to the art of exorcising or casting out devils by conjuration, (*μαγιστρων*) attempted to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus, and pronounce it, by way of charm, over some that were possessed with evil spirits, in hopes that it might be as effectual in their mouths, as it had been in *Paul's*, and that they might thereby bring discredit on the gospel, and advantage to themselves, saying to the devils, that possessed several people, We command, and even bind you with the solemnity of an oath, (*ορκισαμεν*) to come out of these persons, by the authority of that Jesus, whom *Paul* (*παυλος*) proclaims, and calls upon, to expel you.

14 Among these vain pretenders, there were seven sons of one *Seeva*, a chief priest among the *Jews*, (see the note on *Matth.* ii. 4.) that joined together in trying this method upon a certain possessed man, though they themselves had no faith in Christ, as a divine person, or as the true Messiah.

15 But (*δαι*) the wicked spirit, which possessed him, knowing that this was all a farce, despised and insulted them; and yet being at the same time constrained, by a divine power, to own the authority of Christ,

N O T E.

* These aprons are thought by some to have been those, that *Paul* himself wore, when he worked at his tent-making trade; others take them to have been aprons, or other linen cloths, that were brought from sick persons, and being touched by *Paul*, were carried back to

them, and were the tokens of their miraculous cures. But whatever these cloths were, it is certain that no natural or artificial *effluvia* from themselves, could operate in such a miraculous way upon the diseased.

Christ, and of the apostle, as acting under him, cried out, saying, I too well know who *Jesus* is, and that his power is too hard for me; and I know that *Paul* his servant, has authority from him against me, as he acts in his Lord and Master's name, by his commission, and by virtue derived from him: But as for you, Who gave you any right to command me? Show your credentials if ye can; your words are but empty sounds; I neither feel, nor fear any power attending them: Do your worst, I will not submit to you.

16 And the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

16 Immediately hereupon, the man, who was under the power and possession of the devil, flew upon them with prodigious force and fury, rending and tearing like a madman; and he so utterly defeated their exorcisms, and so terribly affrighted, beat, and overpowered them, that they ran out of the house where they were, with their cloaths torn off from their backs, miserably bruised and wounded, and glad to escape with their lives.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

17 And this was transacted in such a public manner, that the noise of it was soon spread abroad among all the *Jews*, and the most learned, as well as other *Gentiles*, that dwelt at *Ephesus*; the effect of which was, that they were universally seized with a dread of the power of infernal spirits, as superior to all human resistance, and of the danger of mocking God, and abusing the sacred name of the Lord Jesus: And he was thought, and spoken of, with the highest reverence and honour among the people, who were convinced by this, that his power was uncontrollable, and that he only was able to give an effectual commission to his servants, to subdue the powers of darkness; and that virtue was derived from him for that purpose, only through faith in his name.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

18 And as the *Ephesians* were remarkably infamous for the abominable incantments, that were practised by them, abundance of those that had believed in Christ, (*πιστευουσας*) were so affected at this manifest and surprising defeat of the exorcists, that, coming of their own accord to the apostle and his company, they frankly owned themselves to have been formerly guilty of attempting the like magical delusions; and publicly declared their wickedness and folly therein, with broken and contrite hearts, to the glory of God, and the caution of others.

19 Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted

19 Yea, a considerable number of those that had dealt in this black art, which was, at best, but the laborious and fallacious trifling of vain minds about curiosities, (*πνευμα*) that it did not concern them to pry into, brought along with them their books, by which they had learnt their conjuring methods,

...the price
of them, and found
fifty thousand
pieces of silver.

words, and charms; and publicly committed them to the flames, in the presence of all the people, that they might testify the sincerity of their repentance, and their utmost indignation against their former crimes, together with their full resolution never to practise them again; and that they might take a sort of holy revenge upon these pernicious and unlawful books, and prevent their falling into the hands of others to their hurt; and might shew how ready they were to sink the money they cost, rather than sell them, and how exceedingly they rejoiced in the grace, that had turned their hearts from Satan to God, and had given them good hopes of a better and more enduring substance: And these books which were thus freely sacrificed to the Redeemer's honour, were so very scarce, that, upon a moderate computation of the value, at which they had been rated, and used to be sold, it was found to amount to the vast sum of fifty thousand pieces of silver *.

So mightily
the word of
God, and prevail-

20 So wonderfully and victoriously did the glorious gospel of the blessed God spread, and triumph in its reputation, and prevail in its visible effects upon the hearts and lives of a great many converts.

After these
things were ended,
Paul purposed in
his spirit, when he
had passed through
Macedonia, and
Greece, to go to
Jerusalem, saying,
After I have been
there, I must also
go to Rome.

21 When the fore-mentioned remarkable transactions were over, Paul determined in his own mind, by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, (*ὁ τῷ πνεύματι*) to visit the churches, after some little time, (*ver. 22.*) which he had planted in Macedonia and Achaia or Greece, that he might counsel, encourage, and establish them, and rectify disorders among them; (*chap. xx. 1, 2, 3.*) and from thence to go forward to Jerusalem; that he might give a further account of his successful labours to his brethren there: (*chap. xxi. 17,—19.*) And he added, in an intimation of his thoughts to some of his friends, This will prove an occasion of my going afterwards from thence to Rome likewise, that I may preach the gospel at that seat of the empire. (*Chap. xxiii. 11.*)

So he sent
two of them that
ministered unto him,
Timothy and Erastus;
but he himself
stayed in Asia
a season.

22 Accordingly he dispatched into Macedonia two of his fellow-labourers, that had come to him, and assisted him at Ephesus, viz. his beloved Timothy, and Erastus, who had been the chamberlain of Corinth. (*Rom. xvi. 23.* See the note there.) These he sent before-hand to regulate some things that were amiss among

N O T E.

According to various computations the learned, some make these fifty thousand pieces of silver amount to fifteen hundred pounds sterling, while others will the account to seven thousand five hundred pounds. And, perhaps, as the

Ephesians were so extravagantly addicted to the magic art, the magistrates had forbid the use of those books that contained its pretended mysteries; and this occasioned their being so excessively dear.

among those churches, and especially at *Corinth* and to help forward their collections for the poor saints at *Jerusalem**, (1 *Cor.* xvi. 1,—4.) as also to give notice of his intention to visit them, as soon as conveniently might be: (1 *Cor.* iv. 17, 19.) But he found it necessary for him to continue some time longer at *Ephesus*, and parts adjacent, in the *Proconsular Asia*, where the Lord had still further work for him to do, though there were many adversaries. (1 *Cor.* xvi. 8, 9.)

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

23 And during his abode here, there arose a violent tumult among the people, in opposition to the only and eminent way of holiness and happiness through Jesus Christ, who is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*. (John xiv. 6.)

24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

24 For there was a noted silversmith, *Demetrius* by name, whose chief business was to make little models of the famous temple of *Diana*, in which the image of that heathen goddess was so placed, as to be seen by opening folding doors in the front; and by the sale of these trinkets, not only to the citizens, but also to strangers, that came from all parts to *Ephesus*, and used to buy and carry them home, either for curiosity, or for superstitious purposes, he had got a bundance of riches, and maintained a great number of workmen under him.

25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth:

25 These, and as many other artificers of the same trade as he could meet with, he summoned together as fit tools, and an interested party, for serving his mercenary design; and, to stir them up in the most touching manner to join with him in it, he made the following artful speech to them, saying, Gentlemen, ye all well know, and have found the sweet of it, that by our trade of making and selling silver models of *Diana's* temple, we not only get a comfortable subsistence for ourselves and families, but gain considerable riches.

26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at *Ephesus*, but almost throughout all *Asia*, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands:

26 And ye both see with your own eyes, and hear from others, that not only at our own populous city of *Ephesus*, but, in a manner, through the whole province of *Asia*, with which we have the greatest traffic, this dangerous fellow, one *Paul*, who sets us for a wonderful reformer, and broacher of a new and strange religion, has, by his plausible way of talking, perverted abundance of people, and prejudiced their minds against what has turned so much to our account, telling them that, notwithstanding all the venerable

N O T E.

* It is generally agreed, that the apostle wrote his first epistle to the *Corinthians*, soon after he had sent these messengers to that, and some other churches in those parts, and before the riot made by *Demetrius*, ver. 24, &c.

There was some controversy to them, Vol.

we and our ancestors have had for images, which are made by human art and labour, there is no such thing as any real divinity residing in them, and that they ought by no means to be worshipped in any view whatsoever. (*Chap. xvii. 25.*)

27 So that not only our profitable trade, by which we get our bread, and all the affluence that any of us have or hope for, must, in all likelihood, be utterly lost, and is actually stigmatized as infamous to such a degree, that it would be dangerous for us to follow it: (*κινδυνεύου ἡμεῖς*) But, which is most shocking and worst of all, even the sacred temple of the great goddess *Diana* itself, which has not its parallel for pomp and grandeur in all the world, is exposed to the utmost contempt; and her excellent majesty, whom not only all *Asia*, but even the whole *Roman* empire, religiously adore, and have in the highest honour, must of necessity be degraded, and disrobed of all her dignity and glory, which is by no means to be borne.

28 And when the artificers heard this subtle insinuating harangue, which was calculated to fire their passions, and strike upon all the springs of superstition and self-interest, under pretence of religious zeal, they were filled with furious indignation against the apostle and his doctrine, and made an uproar in the streets, crying out, in a clamorous and tumultuous manner, Let *Paul* say never so much to the contrary, we will stand up for the religion of our country; we will live and die by our celebrated goddess, and her magnificent temple; Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*! She is a goddess of the first rank; none shall be suffered to despise her.

29 By this means they broke all peace and order, and soon threw the whole city into confusion, terror, and dismay: And when they could not meet with *Paul*, they seized upon two of his brethren and companions in journeying, labours, and sufferings; one of which was *Gaius*, a native of *Thessalonica*, the metropolis of *Macedonia*, though descended from a family of *Derbe*; (*chap. xx. 4.*) and the other was *Aristarchus* of *Thessalonica*, who afterwards was a fellow-prisoner with *Paul*; (*Col. iv. 10.*) and so both of them were *Macedonians*: The mob, having light upon these, dragged them away, as with one accord, to the theatre, to seek their revenge upon them there*, where public games were wont to be celebrated

NOTE

* There is no doubt but that this riotous company brought *Gaius* and *Aristarchus* to the theatre, to abuse and expose them, as a public spectacle to the people; and it is highly probable, that they hoped to oblige them to fight with the wild beasts, as was customary for criminals to do there, and, as it seems from

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, of the Jews

brated in honour of *Diana*, and criminals used to be thrown to the wild beasts.

30 And when the apostle would have courageously and generously ventured into the theatre among the enraged people, to defend his noble cause, and his suffering friends, and to expose himself to danger, rather than leave them in it, the Christian converts were so tenderly concerned for his safety, and so apprehensive of the extreme hazard of this attempt, that they earnestly dissuaded him, and in a manner forced him to desist from it.

31 Yea, some of the *Astarches* themselves, (*Ἀρχαῖ*) who were not only the chief rulers of Asia, but likewise had the direction and ordering of the theatre and of the games that were celebrated there, in honour of *Diana*, and the rest of their deities; even some of these had such a respect and kindness for Paul, that they privately sent a message to him, desiring that he would by no means run the risk of going into the theatre, among such an exasperated and ungovernable rabble, who would scarcely be restrained by all their authority, from the most outrageous acts of violence.

32 In the mean while, so great was the hurry and tumult of the populace, which, by this time, were increased to a prodigious number, that some bellowed out one thing, and some another, according to their own prejudices and passions; some clamoured against Paul, others against the Jews, and others against they knew not what: For the vast multitude that gathered together on this occasion, were in such confusion, that most of them could not tell what was the reason of their rising.

33 And some of them laying hold on a man of note, whose name was † Alexander, they singled him out, to call him to an account; the unbelieving Jews

NOTES.

from 1 Cor. xv. 32. Paul had done before. And Dr. Lightfoot thought that the apostle's having been preserved in some wonderful manner, when he was set to combat with the beasts, was the reason why the *Astarches*, (ver. 31.) had a respect for him, and dissuaded him from exposing himself to such dangers and abuses again. See Lightf. on 1 Cor. xv. 32.

* The word (*ἐκκλησία*) used here, and ver. 39, 41. for a riotous or a lawless assembly, is that which, in the religious acceptance of it, is generally translated a church, as signifying a congregation of the faithful, that assemble together for the celebration of gospel-ordinances of

worship, and the exercise of spiritual discipline.

† This was very probably Alexander the copper-smith, who was a warm persecuting Christian, and a great enemy to the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 14. and afterwards turned apostate, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.; and so was a fit tool for the Jews on this occasion, as his own character would incense the Ephesians against Christianity, and he himself was strongly inclined to fasten an odium upon Paul. And the Jews might hope by this means to gratify their own resentments against Alexander himself, in bringing him into trouble for turning Christian.

... putting him
forward. And A-
lexander beckoned
with the hand, and
would have made
his defence unto
the people.

Jews at the same time urging him to declaim against *Paul*, and excuse them, who were likewise in danger of being insulted as enemies to *Diana*. Accordingly *Alexander*, waved his hand, in token of his desiring silence, and attempted to make an apology to the people; on behalf of himself and his countrymen, that he might screen them, and fix the odium entirely upon *Paul*.

34 But when they
saw that he was
a Jew, all with one
voice, about the
space of two hours,
cried out, Great is
the wrath of the Ephe-
sians.

34 But when the heathen *Ephesians* perceived that he was a *Jew*, who, as such, was a declared enemy to idol-worship, they all roared out with a loud and clamorous cry, as with one voice, for about two hours together, saying, Away with the *Jews* and *Paul*, and all their religion and parties: We are for the ancient religion of our country; *Diana* is our venerable deity; Great is this famous goddess of the *Ephesians*! We own and honour her, and are ready to stand by her with our lives and fortunes.

35 And when
the town-clerk had
appealed the peo-
ple, he said, Ye
men of Ephesus,
what man is there
that knoweth not
that the city
of the Ephesians is
the worshipper of the
great goddess Di-
ana, and of the Ju-
piter which fell
down from Jupi-
ter?

35 At length, when the register *, or president of the theatrical games, had repressed the noisy tumult of the people, he made a pacific speech to them, saying to the following purport, O ye *Ephesians*, suffer me a little to reason with you about this unaccountable riot; What need is there of this loud outcry for our celebrated goddess? Is there a single man amongst us, who does not well know, that the inhabitants of *Ephesus* are universally devout worshippers of our magnificent goddess *Diana*, and that the city itself is, by its charter, concerned to take care of her temple, and her honour, and of the venerable image, which, as tradition tells us, was not made with men's hands †, but fell down immediately from our great god *Jupiter* himself, that it might be an unexceptionable object of our adoration, as being of higher original, than those images made by the hands of men, which *Paul* declaimed against as no gods? And so all that he has said does not affect our religious regards to her.

36 Seeing then
that these things
must be spoken
plainly, ye ought
to

36 Since therefore these are plain points, which cannot be denied, nor, as far as I hear, have ever been contradicted, it behoves you to be easy, and cease from this uproar, and not to attempt any thing precipi-
tately,

I i 2

N O T E S.

* The word, (*γραμματικος*) here ren-
dered town-clerk, properly signifies a
magistrate, who, among the *Jews*, was a
learned man, expert in their laws; and,
among the *Romans*, was a civil magi-
strate of considerable note, and is suppo-
sed to have been chief governor of the
theatrical games.

† The image of *Diana* is spoken of
as falling down from *Jupiter*, by way
of artful insinuation, as if it were not
made with hands, and so were not of
that sort of idols, which *Paul* had said
were no gods, ver. 26. though, in reali-
ty, he absolutely condemned all idols
and image-worship. Chap. xvii. 24, 29.

to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddesses.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

tately, and in the heat of passion, against persons from whom ye have nothing to fear.

37 For as to these two men, *Gaius* and *Aristerchus*, (ver. 29.) whom ye have tumultuously seized and dragged hither, to be exposed and punished; but what I can learn they have offered no violence to this or any other temple, nor sacrilegiously stolen any of its treasures; nor have they spoke opprobriously, or indecently, of your celebrated goddess *Diana*, nor indeed said any thing particularly against her, or her heavenly image in the temple, whatever they may have said against the gods, that are made with hands.

38 If therefore *Demetrius*, and other silversmiths with him, that have fomented this disturbance for private ends of their own, are really aggrieved, or have matter of just complaint against any man for injuring their trade, there are civil court-days frequently kept for hearing such causes; or if they have criminal matters to lay to any one's charge, there are *Proconsuls*, (*arbitrari*)* who are the proper appointed judges to try and determine about them. To one of other of these courts they should bring their action in a legal way, instead of appealing to the people; and upon hearing the merits of the cause, no doubt but justice will be done them.

39 And (2d) if ye have any questions in debate among yourselves about other concerns, of a public and religious nature, that affect the peace and welfare of the community, or the honour of your temple or of your goddesses, they ought to be adjusted, not in a tumultuous manner by the populace, but in a regular assembly as is authorized to take cognizance of them.

40 For truly we are in the utmost danger of being called to a strict account, and severely punished, by our superiors, for the seditious and riotous proceedings of this day; there being no sufficient reason to be alledged in justification or excuse of this tumultuous assembly, and of its outrageous behaviour, to the injury of some persons, and to the manifest terror

N O T E.

* There was properly no more than one *proconsul* in a province at the same time. Therefore some suppose the meaning of, *there are deputies*, or *proconsuls*, to be, that there never is wanting a *proconsul*; others, that the *proconsul* and his *deputy* are here included in this appellation; and others, that the *proconsular* power was, at this time, exercised by two persons, viz. *Celer* and *Albas*, whom the emperor had made *procur-*

tors. And by the *lawful assembly* mentioned in the next verse, may be meant the assembly of the district *probesus*, as there were several such in *Asia*, that were to judge of political and religious affairs, so far as the public was affected by them; and taking things in this view, there is a beautiful distinctness and gradation in this part of the orator's speech. See *M. Biscoe's sermon* at Boyle's lecture, p. 309,—312.

the whole city, and giving umbrage to the government.

41 And when he said these things, he dismissed the assembly. And having said these things to soothe the passions, and awe the minds of the people, he ordered all the company to disperse without delay, and every one to go peaceably about his business, and to his own home.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious is the clear and full dispensation of the gospel, beyond all its shadowings under *John the Baptist's* ministry! And though its sacred ordinances are not to be neglected; yet how much better is it to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, than only with water in the name of the Lord Jesus!—How worthy is this glorious gospel to be preached with all boldness, even in the face of the greatest opposition! But if, after fair trial, any persist in obstinately rejecting and speaking evil of the only way of salvation by Jesus Christ, how reasonable is it for his servants to leave them to themselves, and for his people to separate from them? God himself will own the word of his grace; and those that are faithful to him; their numbers shall increase by the conversion of sinners, that had before been the greatest tools and slaves of Satan; and they shall be established in the faith of the gospel, which God has sealed with surprising miracles. And, O how plainly are miraculous operations to be distinguished from all the juggle of sorcerers; and how evidently were they wrought by the power of the Lord Jesus, through faith in him, to the confusion of devils, and of all unbelievers, that would prostitute his sacred name to their own vile and mercenary ends! In the issue of all contests with the powers of darkness, he will overcome, his name shall be exalted, and the people filled with reverent awe. And, O how excellent are the workings of sincere repentance! It discovers itself in confessing and abhorring, in aggravating and retracting our most gainful and beloved sins, in renouncing all means of promoting them in ourselves or others, and in preferring a holy liberty in Christ, to all the service of Satan, that God in all things may be glorified. But carnal and worldly minds are too much in love with secular interests, to turn from idols to God: They are full of indignation, and make an uproar against the truth, and its preachers and professors, under pretence of zeal for the religion of their country, though it be the worshipping of images, that are made with the hands of men, and are indeed no gods! But how false and injurious is such zeal! How is it made a cloak for private selfish designs! How rashly doth it run into riot and confusion, and bear down all that is truly sacred, with noise and clamour, and wild imaginations, for want of arguments! How ungovernable and unreasonable is its fury against persons that are chargeable with no crime! And how dreadful is it to fall into the hands of a mob of zealots! But how different is the holy zeal of Christ's servants, whose weapons are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God! They only seek the dethroning of devils and all idols from men's hearts, but offer no violence to their persons, or their religion; they raise no mobs, but are orderly subjects, that deserve the protection of the civil magistrate, whose office it is to keep the peace. And, as they are often wonderfully preserved by Providence from the rage of the populace; so they themselves are deterred from inordinate passions, practices, and outrage, by the fear of God, more than by the fear of men, as knowing that they must give a stricter account to him than to them.

C H A P. XX.

Paul travels through Macedonia, Greece, and Asia, till he comes to Troas, 1,—6. Preaches, and administers the Lord's supper, and raises Eutychus from the dead there, 7,—12. Sets forward from thence in his way to Jerusalem, till he comes to Miletus, 13,—16. Sends for the elders of Ephesus, and preaches a farewell sermon to them there, 17,—35. And takes a solemn and most affectionate leave of them, 36,—38.

TEXT.

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months: and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia:

4 And there accompanied him into

PARAPHRASE.

SOON after the riot made by Demetrius and other silversmiths was suppressed, the apostle Paul being apprehensive, that to stay any longer at Ephesus might exasperate them afresh, and expose not only himself, but all the Christians there, to further danger, called the disciples together, that had been converted during his abode in that city; and when he had taken his leave of them, by affectionately fasting them, and wishing grace and peace to be multiplied unto them, he, according to his declared intention, (*chap. xix. 21, 22.*) followed Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, that he might visit the churches which he had planted in that province, and receive their collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem. (*2 Cor. viii. 1,—6. and ix. 1,—5.*)

2 And when he had been with all the churches in those parts, and taken a great deal of pains with them severally, in directing their faith and practice, worship and discipline; in exhorting them to persevere with patience and steadfastness in a holy profession of the gospel, notwithstanding all their trials and sufferings; and in speaking the most comfortable and encouraging things to them, suitable to their circumstances; he then proceeded to Achaia, or Greece strictly so called.

3 Here he spent a quarter of a year among the churches of that province, to counsel, caution, and establish them; and intended to have gone by sea from thence to some port in Syria, that lay directly in his way to Jerusalem: But as the restless infidel Jews, having failed in all their other attempts to destroy him, had privately contrived to way-lay and murder him, and to rob him of the collections of money he was entrusted with, before he could get aboard; when he understood this he altered his mind, and, to disappoint them, resolved to fetch a compass, and return through Macedonia, by the way he had come hither.

4 And this route to Jerusalem from Macedonia lying through the lesser Asia, Sopater or Sospater, who

in Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus, and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus, and Trophimus.

These going before, tarried for us at Troas.

And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days.

who was a kinsman of Paul's, (Rom. xvi. 21.) and a messenger of the Berean church, attended him, together with the writer of this history, (see the note on ver. 5.) in his journey to that province: But (di) the messengers of other churches, that were deputed to go with him to Jerusalem, (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4. and 2 Epist. viii. 19.) did not keep him company in this part of his way; as particularly Aristarchus, and Secundus, and Gaius, who was descended from a family of Derbe, and the beloved Timothy, which were messengers of the church at Thessalonica; and Tychicus and Trophimus, the messengers of the Asiatic church at Ephesus*.

5 All these setting out by agreement a little before the apostle, and us † who accompanied him, went to Troas, to give notice of, and prepare the way for his design of following them; and there they waited, with patience and hope, for our arrival.

6 And when we had taken shipping at Philippi, we sailed down the river Strymon to the Aegean sea, immediately after the time of the passover; and in a voyage of five days, got to our dear brethren, that waited for us at Troas, (ver. 5.) where we staid seven days † for an opportunity of meeting with the whole church at the time of their stated assembling together, according to the general custom of New Testament-churches,

N O T E S.

* The Cambridge manuscript calls these messengers Ephesians. Vid. Mill. in loc. And Trophimus is called an Ephesian, chap. xxi. 29.

† Luke, the writer of this history, had not spoke of himself as one of Paul's company till now, since they were first together at Troas and Philippi, where, at the last of those cities, Lydia and the others were converted, chap. xvi. 11, 12, &c. It seems therefore, that this evangelist had continued, by the apostle's direction, to water the churches which he had planted, and still further to propagate the gospel in those parts; and that now, on the apostle's return to that neighbourhood, they met together again; and, probably, Luke was one of the messengers appointed by the church at Philippi, or, perhaps, by the common consent of the Macedonian churches, to attend Paul with their contributions to Jerusalem. And ever afterwards we find him speaking of himself, as present with the apostle, to the end of this history.

† No notice is taken of these disciples meeting, or of the apostle's preaching to them on the Jewish sabbath; and I

think no sufficient reason can be given for this account of his staying seven days, till the return of the first day of the week, or of their coming, without being called, together on that day for religious worship, but on the supposition that this day was substituted in the room of the seventh, to be kept holy to the Lord. When therefore the apostle went at other times into the Jewish synagogues on their sabbath, it was not, as I apprehend, from a sense of obligation to observe that day, but from a zealous disposition to take the opportunity of full assemblies, as he sometimes did of the great concourse of people at the Passover and Pentecost, to preach to Jews and proselytes. But I cannot find one instance in all the New Testament of the apostles ever calling any one Christian church together, or of their ever meeting as such, on the seventh day; and though judaizing Christians, and, perhaps, some others, in tenderness to them, might observe both days for some time; yet Gentile churches constantly kept to the first day of the week, as appears from 1 Cor. xvi. 2. See the note on John. xx. 26.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, said,

churches, for celebrating the ordinances of Christian worship.

7 And when upon the first day of the week, commonly called, in New Testament-stile, the *Lord's day* (Rev. i. 10.) which, by divine authority, under apostolic direction, was set apart to his honour and service, these disciples assembled together in course, for all acts of public worship, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, and of the eminent effusion of his Spirit at *Pentecost*, on that day of the week; and particularly for celebrating the Lord's supper, the whole of which ordinance is usually expressed by breaking of bread, in remembrance of his death, in which his body was broken as a sacrifice for sin, and spiritual food was prepared for believing souls: When, I say, the believers at *Troas* were assembled for these religious purposes, the apostle *Paul* delivered an excellent sermon to them, relating to evangelical doctrines, privileges, and duties; and being to go from thence on the morrow, after which he might never see them again, he, in his abundant zeal for the glory of Christ and their edification, continued his discourse till midnight.

8 And to prevent any imagination, appearance, or scandalous report of their meeting together for indecent practices in the dark, as well as for the convenience of reading and turning to the holy scriptures, there were many lamps, or candles, to enlighten the room where they were assembled, which was a large upper chamber, or garret; such an apartment being often used in those days for religious exercises, and being most private, and secure from surprises by the enemy.

9 Among this company, there was a certain youth *Eutychus* by name, who sitting in the window, and not being duly impressed with what he heard, nor with a reverence of God in his worship, fell fast asleep: And while *Paul*, being much enlarged in his own spirit, lengthened out his sermon to an uncommon degree, this *Eutychus* was so entirely overcome with sleep, that he fell directly down to the ground from the open window of the room, which was three stories high; and, when taken up, was found to be killed on the spot by the fall, which was an awful rebuke on him, and a loud warning to others, to take heed of giving way to sinful drowsiness in the worship of God.

10 But (sa) *Paul*, to shew how tenderly his compassion was moved, and to give an eminent and endearing confirmation of the gospel, which he then was preaching, immediately broke off his discourse; and

running

10. Trouble not
himself; for his
life is in him.

running down stairs, stretched himself upon the dead
corpse, as *Elijah* and *Elisba* did, one on the body of
the widow of *Sarepta's* son, (1 *Kings* xvii. 21.) and
the other on the body of the son of the *Shunamite*,
(2 *Kings* iv. 34.) which was a signal of power fall-
ing down from heaven to restore life: And when he
had affectionately embraced the young man in his
arms, and prayed over him, he said to his friends,
and the rest of the people, Do not hurry yourselves,
or be distressed any farther at this sad providence; for
his soul is now come into him, and he is alive again.
(See 1 *King* xvii. 21, 22.)

11. When he
therefore was come
again, and had
broken bread, and
eaten, and talked
long while, even
till break of day,
he departed.

11 Then (2.) the apostle, returning to the upper
room*, administred the Lord's supper to the church,
himself partaking of the elements with them, which
by a figure, that puts a part for the whole, may be
expressed by his taking and eating bread: And after-
wards, (αὐλόμενος) having entered into a free conver-
sation with them about their spiritual concerns for a
great while longer, even till day-light, he, (ὡς τις)
in a manner like himself, quite friendly, heavenly,
and beneficial to them, at length took his leave of
them.

12. And they
sought the young
man alive, and
were not a little
astonished.

12 And some of the congregation brought the
young man *Eutychus* into the room, that they might
all be eye-witnesses of his being alive and well, notwith-
standing his bruises and mortal wound by the fall;
and the whole assembly greatly rejoiced, and were
confirmed in the faith of the gospel, on seeing him
raised from the dead; which not only took off all oc-
casions of rash censure, as though the judgments of
God had come upon them, as a superstitious and de-
luded people, but was a noble testimony of his own-
ing them in their religious exercises.

13. And we went
before to ship, and
 sailed unto *Affos*,
where intending to
take in *Paul*: for
he had he ap-
pointed, minding
himself to go a-
board.

13 After all this, we, who were of *Paul's* compa-
ny, setting out before him, took shipping; and in a
coasting voyage sailed to a neighbouring town called
Affos, another sea-port town in the province of *Tro-*
as, where, by agreement, we were to take him a-
board: For so it was ordered among us before-hand,
(ὡς διαταχόμενος) he himself chusing, for the sake of
a little retirement, or some other reasons, to travel to
that place on foot by land.

14. And when he
came with us at *Af-*
fos, we took him
in,

14 And when he came up to us at *Affos*, we glad-
ly took him into the vessel; and soon after arrived at
Mitylene, one of the chief cities of the isle *Lesbos*,
situated

N O T E.

* Some think that the apostle's break-
ing bread, and eating, was merely a
common meal for refreshment: But I
am told in these very terms of *breaking*
bread, ver. 7.

in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I

came, I have been in the east side of that island, about seven miles distant from the *Asiatic* coast.

15 And setting sail from thence, we the next day reached as far as over-against the isle *Chios*, another considerable island, about four leagues off from the *Asiatic* coast in the *Ægean* sea: And the day after that, we touched at *Samos*, another island in the same sea; and then going to, and making a short stay at *Trogyllium*, a harbour in a promontory on the continent of the *lesser Asia*, over-against, and near two leagues distant from *Samos*, we, in one day more, landed at *Miletus*, a sea-port in that province, which lay * several leagues beyond *Ephesus*.

16 For Paul thought it best, and therefore concluded in his own mind, not to call at *Ephesus*, where his friends might be urgent to detain him, but to pass it in his voyage, that he might not wear away too much of his time in the *lesser Asia*; because, being bound for *Jerusalem*, he was very desirous to make all convenient haste, that if possible, by the will of God, he might get thither before the first day of Pentecost, which was then drawing on apace; and he might not only have an opportunity of paying his Christian respects, and giving an account of his travels and success to the church there, but also of trying once more what might be done, through divine grace, among the unconverted *Jews* and proselytes at that time of general concourse.

17 But, (2s) in haste as he was, he stopped long at *Miletus* as to send from thence to *Ephesus* to desire those officers of that large church to come and give him a meeting there †, who sometimes bore the title of *elders*, because they are usually grave ministers, of mature age and judgment; and at other times are called *overseers* or *bishops*, (ver. 28.) because of the pastoral care of such churches, as they are peculiarly related to, is committed to, is committed to, is committed to.

18 And when they arrived, he addressed them in a solemn and affectionate speech, to the following effect, My dear brethren in the faith and service of the gospel, ye yourselves very well know how I have laboured among you all along, on every occasion, and

NOTES.

* Some place *Miletus* about thirty, and others about fifty miles from *Ephesus*.

† As *Ephesus* was the metropolis of *Asia the less*, and the apostle had spent about three years with great success there, chap. xix. 17.—10. See the note on chap. xix. 10. It may well be supposed, that the *Ephesian* church was so large, as to require more pastors than

one, as there were in the church at *Trogyllium*, (Phil. i. 1.) to take the oversight of it; and these very persons that here called *elders* (ἐπισκοποι) styled *overseers* or *bishops*, (ver. 28, which shews that these were of the same import, to signify *elders*, as were the true *bishops* of the New Testament churches.

came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

in the variety of circumstances that have attended me, ever since the very first time of my coming to preach the gospel in this country of the *lesser Asia*, and ye cannot but be thoroughly acquainted with my trials and difficulties, and with the manner of my conduct, particularly toward you, and the church and people at *Ephesus*, the metropolis of that country.

19 Ye have been eye and ear-witnesses, and must needs have observed, how constantly I have laboured in the work of the Lord Jesus, to promote his interest and glory, not with haughtiness, ostentation, and self-applause, but with all meekness and gentleness, condescension and low thoughts of myself, under a sense of my own insufficiency and unworthiness, and even with a flow of tears, at times, in my prayers and preaching, as being deeply affected with the exceeding and abundant grace of Christ toward me, and moved with the most touching grief and compassion, at the stupidity and perverseness, iniquity, and idolatry of the people; and at the sufferings and infirmities of some, and disorders of other gospel-professors; as also with many distressing afflictions and persecutions that have come upon myself, and been sore trials to my faith and patience, by means of the malicious counsels, contrivances, and attempts of unbelieving *Jews* against me.

20 Ye likewise know with what simplicity and godly sincerity, and not as those that corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully, I have fulfilled my ministry; insomuch that, notwithstanding all my difficulties and discouragements, I have never been influenced by fear or favour, or any carnal or worldly motives whatsoever, to conceal, withhold, or shun insisting upon, any one point of faith or practice, that might be for the good and edification of my hearers; but have freely and plainly declared the whole scheme of gospel-truths unto you, as well as others, and have faithfully instructed you into them, at large, in seasonable counsels, cautions, exhortations, and encouragements, both publicly in all religious assemblies, and privately at the several houses that I have resorted to.

21 I can appeal to you, that in all my ministrations I have bore my testimony for Christ, in word and deed, both to the *Jews*, and even to the most learned among the *Gentiles*: This I have done with the greatest earnestness and concern, as one that shall witness either for or against them in the day of judgment; and I have therein, as ye know, chiefly insisted on two of the most important and comprehensive articles of Christian religion: One is the nature

and necessity of unfeigned repentance toward God, which Christ is exalted to give, and which consists in a deep and humbling sense of the evil, mischief, and danger of all sin, and of all its aggravations, as sin; in an ingenuous sorrow and shame for it; in utter hatred of it, and hearty resolutions, by divine grace, against it; and in turning from it to God upon the encouragements, and by the assistance of his free mercy, through Jesus Christ, as manifested in the gospel: And the other grand subject of my ministry has been, the nature and necessity of sincere faith, as terminating upon the person and mediation of Christ, which is also the gift of God, and consists in a convinced sinner's cordially assenting to, approving of, and embracing the gospel-discovery of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only suitable, divine, and all-sufficient prophet, priest, and king of the church; and in receiving and relying on him alone, and on the rich grace of God, through his merit and righteousness, for pardon of sin, and justification, and for a whole salvation.

21 And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel

22 And now, behold another scene of labour and sufferings lies before me; I am going to Jerusalem, being directed and obliged to it, (*το πνεμα*) by inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit, and correspondent resolutions in my own mind, which carry the nature of a sacred bond upon me to comply with them; though I have no revelation of what particular services and troubles the Lord may call me to there, or what the final issue of them shall be, as to my own life, or death.

23 Only this I know in general, that the divine Spirit, whose nature is holy, and who is the sanctifier of his people and servants, and of all their labours and trials, has practically witnessed by events that have befallen me in many cities where I have hitherto been, and may further tell me by inspired prophets in various cities through which I pass, (*chap. xxi. 4, 11.*) that imprisonments, bonds, and ill usage are still to attend me for the sake of Christ, who has said to his disciples, *In the world ye shall have tribulation.* (*John xvi. 33.*)

24 But, I bless God, I am not in the least disheartened, discouraged, or shaken in my resolution to go on, through his assistance, in his work, by any prospect of these terrors; I look upon them all as trifles, and make no manner of account of them (*ουδεις λεγων περισυρειναι*) when they stand in the way of my duty: Nor do I hold, (*ουδε εχω*) or esteem my life itself (that dearest of all earthly enjoyments) to be of any importance, or worth saving, but stand ready to resign it, whenever my Lord pleases, so that I may

gospel of the grace
of God.

may but end my days, and complete my appointed race of service and sufferings, to his glory, with satisfaction and joy to my own and others souls; and may thoroughly fulfil that holy and arduous, honourable and useful ministry, which I have received by the commission, and which I exercise by the gracious furniture and assistance of the Lord Jesus, to publish and confirm, with miraculous and scriptural evidence, the truth and excellence of that gospel, which springs from, and is the appointed means of setting forth and communicating the rich and sovereign grace of God, to the eternal salvation of immortal souls.

25 And now be-
hold, I know that
ye all, among
whom I have gone
preaching the king-
dom of God, shall
see my face no
more.

25 And now observe the way of the Lord, for engaging your diligence in his work, and taking off your dependence from instruments; and fixing it entirely on himself; I am very sure, by the intimations he has given me, that, however he may dispose of me, none of you, my dear *Ephesian* brethren, will ever see me again upon earth: May we all have a joyful meeting in heaven! This then is the very last time that I shall have an opportunity of speaking face to face to you, among whom I have so often preached the great doctrines, privileges, and obligations, pertaining to that kingdom which God in his infinite wisdom and grace has set up in this world, and will complete in all its blessedness and glory in the world to come.

26 Wherefore I
ask you to record
this day, that I am
redeemed from the blood
of all men.

26 As therefore my work is now done in these parts, I solemnly declare, as in the presence of God, and dare appeal to you, as my witnesses, in confidence of your being so at the final judgment; and I may call this parting day to witness, that I have been, through grace, sincerely faithful in discharging my office among you; so that if any that sat under my ministry perish, their blood must be upon their own heads, and I shall stand clear of the ruin of their souls, as having laid before them the only way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, and given them fair warning of the danger of rejecting him through unbelief, and persisting in their sins. (*Ezek. xxxiii. 4, 9.*)

27 For I have
obeyed to de-
cline unto you all
the counsel of God.

27 For as I have preached the pure gospel of Christ, without mixture of human inventions, or judaizing traditions, rites, and ceremonies; so I never, from a desire of pleasing some, or fear of offending others, have knowingly or willingly declined a plain and open publication to you, or others, of any part of that glorious counsel of God, concerning the salvation of lost sinners, which is the product of his eternal wisdom, and of the good pleasure of his will, and which he has now revealed to be made known to the sons of men.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

28 Let me therefore, as a brother, entreat you, and as a father, charge you, in the name and presence of Christ, to follow my example, as far as I have herein followed him: Attend diligently, (*προσέχετε*) in the first place, to the state and temper of your own souls, that they be seasoned with grace, and governed by right principles and views; and look well to your conversation, that it be holy, humble, and unblameable, as becomes the gospel of Christ: And then take special care of those whom your Lord regards as his special property and charge; and who like sheep, ought to be meek and patient, inoffensive and useful, sociable and loving in their holy communion together under his authority, and keeping in his fold: See to it, that none of them, through your neglect, ever suffer in their spiritual concerns, over whom the Holy Ghost (*αὐτός*) has authoritatively placed and settled you, as (*ἐπισκοπῶντες*) inspecting watchmen, and bishops of their souls, by his furnishing you with his gifts and graces for that important trust, and inclining your hearts to it, and regularly investing you in it, according to the directions of his word: He has put you into that laborious and honourable office for this very end, that ye, like *pastor* after his own heart, may feed his people with knowledge and understanding, (*Jer. iii. 15.*) and may exercise good discipline and government over them (*ποιμαίνετε*) with all wisdom and diligence, meekness and faithfulness, even over the church, of which Christ the great Shepherd, who is the true and living God, is the supreme Head; and which he has redeemed and bought for himself, with the infinitely valuable price of his precious blood, which was really his own blood, with as much, yea, more propriety, than a man's blood can be called his own; because he assumed the human nature into so close an union with the divine, as to make it one person with himself; and had an absolute right, originally in himself, to offer or not, as an atoning sacrifice for his church, according to the good pleasure of his own will. Let therefore no pains be thought too much for you to take not only in looking well to yourselves, but also to them. And ye will find great occasion for the most diligence herein.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

29 For I plainly foresee, by the spirit of prophecy, that after I have left you, false teachers, seducers, and persecuting enemies, will break in upon you, and, under various pretences, will act the part of terrible wolves among you, will rend and tear, frighten, worry, and scatter Christ's sheep, and do their utmost to destroy their faith and hope, omitting no means to accom-

accomplish

accomplish their vile designs, nor forbearing any mischiefs or cruelties they can bring upon them.

30 And even from among yourselves, some, whom ye now have a good opinion of, and others, that may hereafter incorporate with you, will rise up in opposition to the simplicity of the gospel, uttering corrupt and dangerous notions to pervert it, and, by their plausible insinuations, to make divisions among the disciples of Christ, and bring them over to their own pernicious errors, and to themselves * as heads of parties.

31 Be ye therefore, like faithful shepherds under Christ, the more watchful over the flock; stand upon your guard against the first motions of these evil men, to put a stop to them; and watch the first staggerings of the followers of the Lamb, to preserve and fortify them, and prevent their being drawn aside: And, to excite your greater care and vigilance, reflect seriously upon the pains I have taken to establish the gospel, and the minds of Christ's disciples in it, and to forewarn and forearm you against these dangers; how for the space of about three years together, (see the note on chap. xix. 10.) I persisted with unwearied application, by night and by day, as opportunities offered, to caution every one against deceivers; and did this with an aching heart, and weeping eyes, lest they should make sad havoc upon their faith, and so my labour upon some of whom I hoped well should prove to be in vain.

32 And now, my dear brethren, being sensible that ye need better light and assistances from above than your own, or than I can give you, for a due discharge of these difficult and important duties, I earnestly recommend and commit you to the favour and blessing of God, and of the eternal Word, who is God, and full of grace and truth, (John i. 1, 14.) that ye may derive all seasonable strength and guidance, preservation and comfort from the Father, through the Son †; and I refer you to his holy gospel, which proceeds from his free grace, and contains all

NOTES.

* Instances of this kind were Phylas and Hermogenes, Hymeneus, and Philatus, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and ii. 17, 18. These were of Asia; forsook the apostle, made disciples to themselves and to their own corrupt tenets, and overthrew the faith of some; and so the disciples they drew away may be understood, either of Christ's professed disciples, whom they perverted, or of disciples which they made to their own parties.

† As the word of his grace may signify either the gospel, which is so styled, chap. xiv. 3. or the Son of God, who is often called the Word, and is to be believed in, together with the Father, John xiv. 1.; and as (το ὕμνου) which is able may refer to God, (το Θεοῦ) as well as to the word of his grace, (το λαλῶντες χάρις αὐτοῦ) I have endeavoured to include all these senses in the Paraphrase.

all needful promises of it, and is his appointed means of conveying it, that, in his strength, ye may observe and act according to his word, as your only rule and ground of hope, which, in the nature of means, is every way sufficient, without mixture of *Jewish* rites, or human inventions, to edify and establish you, and carry you on in his ways, till at length he, in the greatness of his mercy, by this means, shall conduct you to, and put you in full possession of the inheritance which he has appointed to his children, and which is to be enjoyed by all those, and those only, that are renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and so fitted for that glorious state of perfect purity and blessedness.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

33 There is one thing more, for the truth of which I can appeal to God and you, and would have you remember as an answer to those enemies that may wrongfully accuse me of secular views, and as a specimen of that holy disinterestedness that ought to be found in the saints and servants of Christ, and expectants of the heavenly inheritance; I mean, that I have not been desirous, like the false teachers, of heaping up riches, or decking the body with fine apparel, or even of furnishing myself with proper food and raiment, at another man's expence, whether of his silver or gold; but, like *Moses* and *Samuel*, (*Numb. xii. 15.* and *1 Sam. xii. 3.—5.*) have declined every thing of that aspect.

34 Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

34 Nay, on the contrary, ye yourselves are my witnesses, that when I might have demanded a comfortable subsistence from the people, I was so far from making use of my power in this respect, that, rather than the gospel should be hindered, these hands of mine have wrought hard, in making of tents, (*chap. xviii. 3.*) to earn my bread, and to provide, not for myself only, but also for my friends and brethren that accompanied me, and had not opportunity of procuring supplies for themselves.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

35 Thus by example, as well as doctrine, I have set before you all those things that I thought needful to direct your conduct, together with your preaching; and particularly have shewn you how it becomes you, as circumstances and occasions require, to labour with your own hands, as I have done, that ye may not only provide for yourselves, and so take off the prejudices of weak and covetous minds against you, as if ye were mercenary creatures, that make a gain of godliness, but may likewise be capable of relieving the poor, that are sick and infirm, and unable to work for themselves. And that ye may not think much at this, ye should often reflect on a memorable saying

saying of the Lord Jesus himself*, namely, that *It is more blessed to give than to receive*; meaning that it is a greater happiness, comfort, and honour, more God-like, and acceptable to him, and derives a more signal blessing from him, to do good in acts of charity to the poor, than to receive benefactions from others, or than to increase in worldly stores.

36 And when the apostle had finished this solemn, moving discourse, he, to give them a parting prayer as well as a farewell sermon, fell down on his knees, and, in that posture of holy reverence, and humble importunity, poured out his earnest requests to the Lord for them all, they joining with him therein, that they might be enabled by his grace to understand, receive, and practise the good counsel that had been given them, and might be directed and assisted, supported and succeeded in all their way and work, for the glory of God and the good of his church, and that they themselves, and all their labours, might be accepted of him in Christ.

37 Hereupon they all burst out into floods of tears, and throwing themselves, one after another, on Paul's neck, with hearts full of tenderness, love, and grief, they embraced and saluted him in the most affectionate manner, as the dearest friends use to do at parting.

38 They were exceedingly troubled at the thoughts of losing the present pleasure and advantage of his good company, counsels, and ministrations; but were most abundantly distressed in reflecting on the words, whereby he had plainly told them, (*ver. 25.*) that they would never see him in the land of the living again. And, like fast and endeared friends, that are loth to part, they attended him to his embarkation, shewing him all the kindness and respect they were capable of, and wishing him a prosperous voyage by the will of God.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a mercy is it to see the servants of Christ get safe through the uproars that are at any time made against them, and to take our leave of them in peace. And how affectionately and religiously should they part with their Christian friends and brethren, who cannot but be grieved at the loss of their edifying company and ministrations;

NOTE.

* Some have thought that here is a reference to what Christ said in *sense*, though in different words, *Luke* xiv. 33, 34. and xvi. 9. But as they are expressly called the words of the Lord Jesus, it rather seems that this was a saying used by our Lord on some occasions, and familiarly known among his disciples, though omitted by the Evangelists in the history of his life. If so, whether the apostle had the account of it

L 1

nistrations; especially when they have reason to think that they shall never see their faces any more. But in the most afflictive and self-denying cases, it becomes us to say, The will of the Lord be done: However, since ministers must die as well as other men, how ready should we be to accompany them, as long as we can, in their services and sufferings, and to attend their holy ministrations, especially on the Lord's days, which are divinely set apart for the celebration of sacred ordinances, such as hearing the word, breaking of bread, and prayer: And whenever we are engaged in religious worship, how should we watch against drowsiness and sleep, lest we meet with a rebuke like *Eutychus*, who fell down dead, though God, for his own glory, and the comfort of his people, raised him to life again? How indefatigable was the great apostle in the service of his Lord! He sometimes laboured with his hands to supply his own and other's wants, as knowing that our Saviour himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive; and at other times he laid himself out, by night and by day, for counselling, cautioning, establishing, and building up believers, and directing the pastors of churches, as well as for the conversion of sinners. What an excellent pattern has he set the ministers of the gospel! And how happy is it for them to be able, with a good conscience, and in view of a future judgment, to appeal to their hearers, as witnesses for them at their final parting! With what prayers and tears, affectionate concern and holy zeal, humility, condescension, and contempt of this world, should they, like this great apostle, serve the Lord Jesus, amidst the various trials that befall them! With what unbiassed and disinterested faithfulness and plainness should they declare the whole counsel of God, insisting especially on the most necessary and practical parts of it, such as faith and repentance, that the guilt of souls that perish may be chargeable upon their own stupidity and obstinacy, and not on any partiality or neglect of those that ministered to them: And how cheerfully should they follow the footsteps of Providence in their ministrations, whatever dangers it may expose them to! They should expect sufferings for the sake of Christ, and even despise their own lives, in comparison with finishing their course with joy, and fulfilling the trust which Christ has committed to them, for setting forth the excellencies of the gospel of the grace of God. O with what diligence should they look to themselves, and to the church of the dear Saviour, who is God, and by his own infinitely dignified blood has purchased it for himself! How, in love and duty to him, and to the Holy Ghost, who has made them overseers, should they feed his people with sound doctrine, and watch over them in the Lord, that neither secret nor open enemies may seduce any of them! But, alas, who is sufficient for these things! And what need have pastors, as well as their flocks, to be recommended by prayer, and to commit themselves by faith to Christ and to the power and promises of God through him, to carry them on with an increase of gifts, graces, and success, and to give them a free admission at last to the eternal inheritance, which is to be enjoyed by none but holy souls!

C H A P. XXI.

Paul sets sail with his company from Miletus, and passes by several places in his way to Cesarea. 1,—7. There they lodge at Philip the evangelist's house, and travel on foot from thence to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the remonstrances that, upon Agabus's prophecy of Paul's sufferings, were made against it, 8,—17. He salutes his brethren there, and, at their persuasion, purifies himself according to the law, in condescension to the prejudices of the Jews, 18,—26. The Asiatic Jews, seeing him in the temple, cry out furiously, and incense the people against him, who violently seize him as a criminal, 27,—30. He narrowly escapes with his life, by the assistance of the chief captain, who rescues him out of their hands, and gives him liberty to speak in his own defence, 31,—40.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara.

WHEN Paul, and those of us who were of his company, had got away with much ado, (*πονομήσας*) like persons dragged with violence, from our dear Ephesian friends, who were loth to part with us, and we with them; we put off to sea, and, by the favour of Providence, sailed directly in a prosperous voyage to Coos, an island in the *Ægean* sea, famous for the temples of *Æsculapius* and *Juno*; and, the day after that, we arrived at another island, called *Rhodes*, greatly renowned for the *Colossus*, or huge statue of brass, which was erected to the honour of the sun; was seventy cubits high, and stood astride over the mouth of the harbour, in which the ships sailed between its legs, and was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world; and from thence we sailed to *Patara*, the metropolis and chief port of *Lycia*.

And finding a ship sailing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard and set forth.

2 And there happily meeting with a ship that was bound for *Syrophœnicia*, we went aboard her, and set forward for that country, which lay directly in our way to *Jerusalem*.

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to make her business.

3 Now when we came within sight of Cyprus, which lay out of our road toward the north, we passed that island, leaving it at some distance on our left hand, and made the best of our way for Syria; and at length reaching Tyre, the chief port and city of Phœnicia, a province of Syria, we went ashore: For there the vessel we sailed in was to deliver up her cargo.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit,

4 And there being at this city a company of believers in Christ, we found them out and visited them; and as they were extremely desirous of our staying with them, and we, being now landed on the borders of *Canaan*, could easily get to *Jerusalem* by the time that the apostle had prefixed, we continued

Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished our course

there a whole week, that we might spend a Lord's day with them, (see the note on *chap. xx. 6.*) as well as improve opportunities on other days for mutual edification and consolation: And while we were there, some of them, who were endued with extraordinary gifts, told *Paul*, by an immediate suggestion of the Spirit, that unless he would expose himself to the utmost danger of his life, he must not pursue his journey to *Jerusalem**, because great troubles would befall him, in case of his going thither.

5 But (as) not being terrified at the thoughts of the adversaries which he might meet with, and whose mischievous attempts against him God could over-rule for his own glory, and the furtherance of the gospel; and knowing in himself, by the Holy Ghost, that bonds and afflictions were to attend him in the discharge of his duty, (*chap. xx. 23.*) he would by no means be dissuaded from his important design; and so, when the seven days were expired, we set out, and went to the sea-side, all the brethren of *Tyre* accompanying us with great affection and respect, and honouring us with presents, and bringing their wives and children along with them, till we got out of the city, that they all might learn to reverence the faithful servants of Christ, and might have the benefit of their instructions and prayers: And when we came to the shore, the whole company kneeled down with great solemnity upon it, and joined with the apostle in humble addresses to the throne of grace, for the special presence and blessing of God to be with those of us that were upon our journey, and with those we were to leave behind us.

6 And when we had affectionately embraced and saluted one another in a Christian manner, our company went a ship-board, for a coasting voyage; and the *Tyrian* brethren, with their wives and children, returned to their own homes, that they and their houses might serve the Lord.

7 And after, through the good hand of our God upon us, we had finished our passage by sea from *Tyre*

NOTES.

As when God told *David*, 1 Sam. xxiii. 12. that the men of *Keilah* would deliver him up to *Saul*, *David* understood it to be, on supposition that he should stay in *Keilah*, and therefore went from thence, and escaped *Saul's* rage: So these disciples seemed to understand their prophetic impulse to be an intimation from the Spirit, that *Paul*, if he were so minded, might avoid his danger, by not going to *Jerusalem*; and there-

fore, in their abundant affection to him and concern for his safety, would have dissuaded him from going thither. It is highly probable, that they gave presents to the apostle and his company at parting, as their friends at *Malta* did, *chap. xxviii.* And it is thought by some that this was a fulfilment of the prophecy, *Psalm* 12. that the daughter of *Tyre* should be there with a gift.

from Tyre, came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them six days.

And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came to Cæsarea; and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven) and abode with him.

And the same day we had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind

Tyre, we landed at *Ptolemais*, a city of *Galilee*; and paying our respects in the usual forms of religious friendship to the Christian brethren there, we staid with them one day only, to tell them what great things the Lord had done by *Paul's* ministry; and to enquire how the good work went on among them; as also to give them suitable instructions and exhortations, for their caution, encouragement, and comfort.

8 And on the morrow, we, who were *Paul's* attendants, went with him from that city, and proceeded by land to *Cæsarea* in *Palestine*, where the first converts were made from among the proselytes of the gate; (*chap. x.*) and, going into the house of *Philip*, we took up our quarters with him, who was both an evangelist, and one of the seven first deacons that had been chosen by the church at *Jerusalem*, (*chap. vi. 5.*) and who came to this city soon after his preaching Christ had been eminently blessed to the conversion of the *Samaritans*, and of the *Ethiopian* eunuch; (*chap. viii. 5, 6, 35,—40.*) and now resided here.

9 This famous man had four daughters, who had preserved their chastity in an unmarried state, and were endued with the spirit of prophecy for understanding the scriptures of the Old Testament, and foretelling future events, in further accomplishment of the memorable prediction of *Joel*, before mentioned. (*Chap. ii. 17.*)

10 And while we continued at this city, where we spent a considerable time in conversing with our Christian friends about the things of God, and in other religious exercises, a certain prophet came down thither from *Judea*, whose name was *Agabus*, and who some years before had foretold the great famine, which afterwards came to pass. (*Chap. xi. 28.*)

11 This inspired man coming into our company, and seeing the belt with which *Paul* used to gird up his long garments about his loins in travelling, took it up, and, by way of prophetic sign*, bound his own hands and feet with it, after the manner that malefactors were wont to be bound when they were apprehended; and, to interpret the meaning of this significant action, he said, The Holy Ghost, by whose

N O T E.

* *Agabus*, it seems, first bound his hands, and afterwards loosing them, bound his feet with *Paul's* girdle, in an emblematical way, to impress the spectators with a moving sense of the ill treatment the apostle would meet with, which was prophetically represented by his action, in like manner as *Isaiah* was ordered to walk naked and barefoot, for

a sign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia, to intimate their captivity by the *Assyrians*; (*Isa. xi. 3, &c.*) and as *Jeremiah* was ordered to put bands and yokes upon his neck, to signify that the kings of *Edom*, *Moab*, &c. should be brought into subjection to the king of *Babylon*; (*Jer. xxvii. 2, &c.*)

bind the man that oweth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

11 And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

whose immediate suggestion I now speak, assures me that, when the owner of this girdle arrives at Jerusalem, the Jews there will certainly occasion his being bound like a criminal, (*ver.* 33. and *chap.* xx. 25.) as I have now bound my hands and feet in your sight; and will give him up to the power of the Romans, to abuse him, as they did his great Lord and Master himself. (*Matth.* xx. 19.)

12 And when we heard him speak so peremptorily of the terrible things that would befall the apostle we, who were of his company, and the disciples of that city, together with us, were so deeply affected at it, and so tenderly concerned for his liberty, ease and safety, that we all joined in earnestly begging of him, even with tears in our eyes, (*ver.* 13.) that he would by no means think of pursuing his journey to Jerusalem, and run a life, so important as his, into unavoidable danger there.

13 But (sa) Paul replied, with great presence of mind, with a noble fortitude of spirit, and with a good degree of generous warmth and holy resentment as our Lord did to Peter, when he would have dissuaded him from his sufferings, (*Matth.* xvi. 23.) What are ye a-doing? or what would ye be at, my dear friends and brethren, while ye thus lament, and cry, and remonstrate against the will of God, and almost overwhelm my soul with grief, to see the timorousness, weakness, and carnality of your temper, together with your fond affection for me; and to think how ye would throw temptations in my way, to stagger my courage and resolution in the cause of Christ, and how impossible it is to acquit myself to God, and my own conscience, and at the same time to oblige you? For, though I heartily love you, and should be willing, if the Lord see meet, to continue in the body for your edification and the common benefit of the church; yet, as to myself, who can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me, (*Phil.* i. 13.) I stand prepared, not only to submit to the severest bonds, but even cheerfully to lay down my life itself, as a martyr, at Jerusalem, for the honour of my dear Lord and Saviour, and for sealing his gospel with my own blood.

14 And when we found that he could not be prevailed upon to alter his purpose, by all our melting tears and pressing importunity, we no longer persisted in our mournings and entreaties, but acquiesced in his determination to go forwards, at all adventures, saying, Not our wills, but the sovereign and holy will of the Lord Jesus, (*ver.* 13.) be done, in that we

and manner, whatever it be, as shall be most for his glory, and the good of his church.

15 And at the expiration of the time that was thought proper for us to tarry at *Cæsarea*, we packed up our baggage *, and setting out with it, for the remainder of our journey, went up to *Jerusalem*; those of us that were of *Paul's* company, resolving to attend and assist him, as far as God should enable us, in his dangers.

16 There likewise accompanied us some of the Christians that dwelt at *Cæsarea*, to conduct and accommodate us in our way; and as lodgings were scarce at *Jerusalem*, during the festival, they brought along with them a native of *Cyprus*, whose name was *Mnason*, a good old disciple of Jesus Christ, venerable for his age, and his long standing with reputation and honour in the profession of the gospel, that we might be entertained at his house, who ordinarily resided at *Jerusalem*, and was ready to receive and own us, notwithstanding all that he had heard of the great sufferings *Paul* would be exposed to. (ver. 11.)

17 And when we arrived at *Jerusalem*, the faithful brethren there, ministers and private Christians, rejoiced to see us, and gave us a most affectionate and hearty welcome, both on account of the apostle's great worth, and of the benevolence we brought for the relief of their poor.

18 And as *James* was the only apostle then presiding over the church at this great city, *Paul* went the very next day to make him a visit, taking us, his associates, along with him, to be witnesses of, and edified by, what might pass between them: And all the elders of the church, (see the note on chap. xi. 30.) having received notice of our coming, were present at this meeting,

19 And after *Paul*, in his usual manner, had paid his friendly and religious respects to them, he went over the particulars, one by one, (*καὶ ἕκαστον*) of the great and glorious things which God had done in the conversion of the *Gentiles*, and in the settlement of churches among them at various places, through *Greece* and the *Lesser Asia*, by means of his ministry, since

N O T E

* Some think that they loaded mules, or other carriages, with their baggage, which, probably, contained the money they were to distribute among the poor Christians at *Jerusalem*; and others, that they carried them upon their own backs, as soldiers do their knapsacks. But be that as it will, this being the first time that taking up their carriages or packs (*αποσκευάζουσιν*) is mentioned, it seems as if their luggage came by sea from *Ptolemais* to *Cæsarea*, while they themselves, or most of them at least, having finished their voyage, (ver. 7.) performed that part of their journey, as they afterwards did all the remainder of it to *Jerusalem*, by land.

since he was last at *Jerusalem*. (See the note on chap. xv. 3.)

20 And when they heard the surprising and delightful account, the apostle *James* himself, as well as the other elders, instead of envying his great success, ascribed all glory to the Lord Jesus, and to God through him, as the author of it; owned it to be the effect of his victorious and sovereign grace; rejoiced in it, and blessed his holy name for it: And then that this apostle of the *Gentiles* might rejoice and glorify God with them, and mutual affection might be established between them, they, in their turn, reported what a remarkable progress the gospel had made from small beginnings among their own countrymen, and thereupon they gave him a piece of advice, saying, By what you yourself, dear brother, may have observed, and have now heard from us, you cannot but be very sensible, that though the bulk of our nation still continue obstinately in unbelief; yet as there is a remnant of them according to the election of grace (Rom. xi. 5, 7,) so there are many myriads, (*myriades*) or tens of thousands of *Jews*, that have embraced the faith of Christ, receiving him as the true Messiah, and depending on his merit and righteousness for justification before God: And yet you must needs know, that, through early prejudices, they are generally exceeding fond of the law of *Moses*, as not absolutely abrogated, and are zealous sticklers for *Jewish* converts still continuing to observe its rites and ceremonies, as things that have been undoubtedly of divine appointment for many ages past. (See the note on chap. xvi. 3.)

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the *Jews* which are among the *Gentiles*, to forsake *Moses*, saying, That they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

20 And when they heard the surprising and delightful account, the apostle *James* himself, as well as the other elders, instead of envying his great success, ascribed all glory to the Lord Jesus, and to God through him, as the author of it; owned it to be the effect of his victorious and sovereign grace; rejoiced in it, and blessed his holy name for it: And then that this apostle of the *Gentiles* might rejoice and glorify God with them, and mutual affection might be established between them, they, in their turn, reported what a remarkable progress the gospel had made from small beginnings among their own countrymen, and thereupon they gave him a piece of advice, saying, By what you yourself, dear brother, may have observed, and have now heard from us, you cannot but be very sensible, that though the bulk of our nation still continue obstinately in unbelief; yet as there is a remnant of them according to the election of grace (Rom. xi. 5, 7,) so there are many myriads, (*myriades*) or tens of thousands of *Jews*, that have embraced the faith of Christ, receiving him as the true Messiah, and depending on his merit and righteousness for justification before God: And yet you must needs know, that, through early prejudices, they are generally exceeding fond of the law of *Moses*, as not absolutely abrogated, and are zealous sticklers for *Jewish* converts still continuing to observe its rites and ceremonies, as things that have been undoubtedly of divine appointment for many ages past. (See the note on chap. xvi. 3.)

21 Now (*da*) they have had informations against you from your inveterate enemies, (*ver. 27, 28.*) that wheresoever you go, you not only excuse the *Gentile* converts from all compliance with the law of *Moses*, but that you likewise teach all those *Jews* themselves who dwell among them, to throw off its observance entirely at once, and so lead them into an utter apostacy from it; (*anastrophe didactus*) telling them that they ought no longer to circumcise their children, nor to conform themselves, in their lives and conversation, to the long established and universally practised usages of our forefathers, or to the ordinances and customs which are prescribed in that divine law.

22 What therefore is to be done in this case, take off their prejudices, and conciliate their favour to you, and their good opinion of your labours and success among the *Gentiles*, as also to dispose them to a kind acceptance of the liberality of the churches which you have brought for the relief of our poor

The whole company of them, that have heard this charge against you, unless they be some way pacified, will certainly gather together, in a tumultuous manner to complain of you, and quarrel with you on that account: For, as you are so noted and public a person, it is impossible but that, by one means or other, they will hear of your being come hither.

23 Do therefore
this that we say to
thee: we have four
men which have a
vow on them;

24 Them take,
and purify thyself
with them, and be
charged with
them, that they
may shave their
heads: and all may
know that those
things whereof
they were inform-
ed concerning thee,
are nothing, but
that thou thyself
also walkest order-
ly, and keepest the
law.

23, 24 Permit us therefore to tell you what method we think may be best for you to go into, to quiet their minds, and take off those prejudices that would hinder their attending upon, and profiting by your ministry; there are four converted *Jews* amongst us, that have voluntarily brought themselves under a vow of *Nazaritism* for a certain time, which is near expiring. Now, our advice is, that you would take to you these men, whose case is publicly known, and go through the remaining rites of purification with them; (*Numb. vi. 2,—8.*) * and then be at joint expence with them in providing sacrifices, that, at the end of the days of their separation, their heads may be shaved, and the offerings may be made for you all, as required on such occasions; (*Numb. vi. 13,—20.*) and so, by this manner of your proceeding, all that are now prejudiced against you, may be convinced that those reports are not true †, which have been made to them about your utterly preaching down the law of *Moses*, as though the *Jews* themselves must, on no account whatsoever, observe any of its ritual ordinances; but that even you yourself, being a *Jew*, walk regularly according to its venerable customs, and are, in your own practice, on proper occasions, an observer of its rites, and therefore cannot be supposed

NOTES.

* It seems to me as if these elders knew of *Paul's* having taken a voluntary vow of a like nature upon himself, at the expiration of which he had shaven his head in *Cenchrea*; (see the two last notes on chap. xviii. 18.) and therefore they advised him to join in company with these four persons, and to do every thing else with them that was enjoined that case by the law, till their heads were also shorn; and then to go and publicly offer the required sacrifices together with them.

† Though the apostle *Paul*, on all occasions, zealously opposed an observation of the *Mosaic* law, as necessary to, or having any concern in, the great business of justification; and though, as far as the *Jews* were able to bear it, he gradually shewed that it was fulfilled by the death of *Christ*, and so was no longer

binding in point of conscience; yet he never asserted, as his enemies falsely alleged, that it was *absolutely* unlawful for a *Jew* to comply with its ceremonial rites, in any cases, or on any account whatsoever; but rather left it as an indifferent matter, or, at least, as what the wisdom, goodness, and condescension of God to them, tolerated for the present, and as what they might lawfully observe in the view of national civil rites, during the continuance of the *Jewish* polity, till they, by degrees, should be thoroughly brought off from their conscientious scruples, and confirmed prejudices, and till, at length, many of those rites would become impracticable by the destruction of the temple, and of their political state: See the note on chap. xvi. 3. and Dr. Leland's *disquis. authorit.*, &c. Vol. I. p. 404.—411.

25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel,

posed absolutely to forbid other Jews doing the same.

25 But (δε) as to those Gentiles who have been brought over to the faith of Christ, you very well know, that, when you was formerly here, we, upon mature deliberation, in a full assembly of apostles and elders, with the whole church, (*chap. xv. 22.*) unanimously agreed, and (*ἑνεκεν*) sent letters, by you and Barnabas, to them, in which, to preserve their Christian liberty, we declared our sentiments, as under the conduct of the Holy Ghost, and we are still of the same mind, that they ought not to be obliged to any such thing as a subjection to *Mosaic* ordinances; except that we thought it necessary, in present circumstances, to insist on their abstaining from meats and drinks offered to idols, and from eating of blood, and the flesh of animals that have been suffocated or choked to death, without taking away their blood, as well as on their keeping at the utmost distance from the moral impurity of unlawful embraces. (See the paraphrase and notes on *chap. xv. 20, 28.*)

26 Then Paul, according to their advice, in condescension to such as were weak in the faith, that he might win upon them, took these four men along with him; and the next day beginning to observe the rites of purification, as a *Nazarite*, he went in company with them into the temple, not in a tumultuous way, (*chap. xxiv. 18.*) but very peaceably and orderly, to give notice to the priest, that they had obliged themselves to a religious separation for seven days, which they would accomplish with the usual rites and ceremonies, even till the time that the sacrifices were to be offered for himself, and each of his partners in that service, according to the law. (See the two last notes on *chap. xviii. 18.*)

27 But (δε) when the seven days, designed for their separation, were about to be fulfilled, the unbelieving Jews, that dwelt in the *Lesser Asia*, and came to celebrate the passover from that country, where Paul had spent about three years in preaching, and had met with great opposition from them; (*chap. xix. 9. and xx. 31.*) some of these spying him in the inner court of the temple, which none but *Israelites* were suffered to enter, took that occasion to incense the people against him; and, raising a mob, seized him with fury and violence, to the manifest profanation of the sanctuary, and of the solemnities of worship, for the honour of which they pretended to have the greatest concern;

28 Making at the same time a hideous clamour, and calling out to the multitude, Ye men of *Israel*,

help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and farther, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

the peculiar people of God, if you have any spirit in you, any zeal for your religion and country, or any veneration for this sacred place, come hither; aid and assist us with all your might: This is the man, whom we have told you of, (*ver. 21.*) that makes it his business, wherever he goes among the nations, to preach such pestilential doctrine to all he can meet with, as is directly contrary to the rites and privileges of the *Jewish* church and state, to the ancient and divine law of *Moses*, and even to the honour and dignity of this holy temple: Yea, furthermore, (*ver. 22.*) not content with this, he has been so audacious, as to profane this house, which is consecrated to our God, honoured with the ark and mercy-seat, and other symbols of his special presence, and peculiarly appropriated to our religious use, by bringing uncircumcised *Gentiles* into its sacred inclosure, as though it were to be prostituted to the vilest of sinners.

29 For they had seen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.

29 Their pretence for charging him with having introduced uncircumcised *Gentiles* thither was, that they had before seen him in the city, in company with *Trophimus* an *Ephesian* Gentile convert, and one of the messengers of the *Asiatic* churches. (*Chap. xx. 4.*) And so, without examining any further, they unjustly and maliciously asserted, as taking it for granted, without any proof, that *Paul* had brought him, with some others of like character, into the temple along with himself, though, in fact, it was no such thing.

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

30 Hereupon the whole city was in an uproar, and the people ran tumultuously together in vast crowds, to see and hear what was the matter: And, finding that *Paul* was the man exclaimed against, they furiously fell upon him, with an intent to kill him; and, that the temple might not be defiled with his blood, they dragged him out of it by main force; and immediately its doors were shut, to prevent any further confusion or disorder there: So great was their bigotry for ceremonial rites, at the same time that they made no scruple of murdering one of the best of men, without any just provocation.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

31 And while, in the heat of their rage, they were thirsting after his blood, and endeavouring in a riotous manner to dispatch him, as a rebel against their law, word was brought to *Claudius Lyfias*, (*chap. xx. iii. 26.*) the Roman officer (*χιλιερχω*) who had a thousand soldiers under his command, and kept garrison in the tower of *Antonia*, to prevent insurrections, especially at the public feasts; (see the note on *chap. iv. 1.*) he was told that the people of

Jerusalem were all up in arms, and in the utmost confusion.

31 Who immediately took soldiers, and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain, and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

32 Upon this, to keep the peace of the city, he instantly took along with him a detachment of soldiers, and of centurions, or commanders of hundreds, that were officers under him, and marched down from the castle to the mob with all possible expedition; and as soon as they saw the head officer, and the soldiers at his heels, they ceased from beating *Paul*, and from pursuing their barbarous design of putting him to death by club law, for fear of the terrible consequences to themselves. So seasonably did the providence of God appear, for the preservation of his faithful servant, at the most critical juncture.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

33 Then the chief captain, having made his way to *Paul*, took him into custody, that he might be screened from popular fury, and be examined, and proceeded against, if there should be occasion, according to law; and concluding, for the present, that the man, against whom the people were so outrageous, must needs be very criminal, he, according to *Agabus's* prophecy, (*ver. 11.*) ordered two chains to be clapt on him, for the greater security and ignominy, and for satisfying the populace, that he had not taken him out of their hands with a design to discharge him; and then he asked them who his prisoner was, and what offence he had been guilty of.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

34 But (31) as they were all in a rage, and did not know one another's mind, some of this vast body of people clamoured against him for one crime, and others for another: And when the chief captain found that he could get no satisfaction, about the real cause of their being so bitterly incensed against him, through the confusion they were in, he ordered the centurions and their bands to conduct him, as his prisoner, for further examination and security, to the tower or castle of *Antonia*, which was under his own jurisdiction.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence of the people.

35 And when *Paul* began to ascend the stairs, which joined to a portico of the temple, and led up from thence to the castle *, the soldiers were forced to carry him in their arms, by reason of the rudeness and outrage of the mob, that they, who were ready to tear him to pieces, might not abuse him, and that, being of low stature, he might not be smothered and crushed to death in the crowd.

N O T E.

* *Josephus* says, the castle of *Antonia* was situated on a rocky hill high, at that corner of the outward temple where the western and northern portico's joined, and that there were stairs descending from it to each of them. *Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. 5. § 3.*

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian which before these days madeit an up-
par, and leddest out into the wil-
derness four thou-
sand men that were
murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which
am a Jew of Tar-
sus, a city in Cili-
cia, a citizen of no
mean city: and I
beseech thee, suf-
fer me to speak
unto the people.

40 And when
he had given him
audience, Paul stood
on the stairs, and
beckoned with the
hand unto the peo-
ple: and when
there

36 For a vast multitude of people pushed and press-
ed up towards him, crying out, with the utmost in-
dignation against him, as men of the same wicked
spirit did against our blessed Lord, (*John* xix. 15.)
Away with this fellow out of our sight; (*αὐτὸν αὐτὸν*)
hang him up; we cannot bear to see him live.

37 And when Paul was brought toward the up-
per part of the stairs, near the entrance into the cas-
tle, he addressed himself in a respectful manner to the
chief captain, saying, in the Greek language, Sir,
will you please to suffer me (*ἵναμι εἰπῶ*) just to speak a
word or two, to let you know who, and what I am,
which you could get no certain account of from the
people, and to pacify them. The chief captain an-
swered with surprise, What then! do you under-
stand Greek so well as to be able to talk it?

38 Are you not that infamous Egyptian impostor,
who, pretending to be a prophet, came hither about
two or three years ago, and made an insurrection a-
mong the people, and heading four thousand men,
a pack of ruffians and cut-throats, led them out of Je-
rusalem into the wilderness, from whence, his army
having increased to a great multitude *, he returned
with a design of surprising this great city; but was
defeated, though he himself made his escape? The
violent exclamations of the people against you make
me suspect that you are the man, and that they have
discovered some secret attempts to act the same rebel-
lious part over again.

39 Paul replied, with great meekness and com-
posure of mind; No, Sir, I am neither an Egyptian,
nor a ring-leader of rebels; but am by nation a Jew,
and a native of Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia; a
freeman of that city, which, far from being ignoble,
(*αἰώνιος*) is of great renown for learning, riches, and
loyalty: And the favour I would humbly beg of you
is, that, though I am your prisoner, I may be per-
mitted to speak a few words for clearing up my char-
acter to the people, to whom I have been falsely and
maliciously accused.

40 And when Lyſias had granted him free leave
to say what might be proper in his own defence,
Paul, standing upon an upper part of the stairs, and
so in a convenient situation to be heard, made signs
to the people with his hand, to intimate that he was
going to speak, and desired audience: And when,
partly

N O T E.

* This army afterwards increased to
thirty thousand. See Dr. Lardner's ac-
count of it from Josephus, with various
methods of taking off the difficulty that
arises from the disagreement there is be-
tween Josephus and our sacred historian
in their respective narratives of this fact.
Credibil. gosp. hist. Vol. II. p. 371, &c.

there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

partly from curiosity, and partly out of respect to the chief captain, an universal and profound silence was procured, he lifted up his voice, and addressing them in that dialect of the *Hebrew* language which was most commonly used and understood at *Jerusalem*, made a noble speech in vindication of himself, and of his glorious cause, to the following effect.

RECOLUTIONS.

How pleasant is it to travel up and down under the guidance and protection of a good Providence, and to meet with Christian friends in the towns and cities where we come! And how concerned should persons of this character be, to spend their time together in religious converse and advice, for mutual edification, about the great things that God has done by the ministrations of his servants, in one place and another, for the conversion of sinners, and the establishment of the churches of Christ! This is matter of joy and praise; and all upright ministers and people will heartily glorify God for it, though it may far exceed any success that they themselves have been honoured with. They ought to receive one another gladly, and should meet and part with Christian, as well as civil salutations, and, as opportunities and occasions offer, with solemn prayer. But, O how touching is the thought, when, though the spirit of prophecy is ceased, which was always answered in events, they have great reason to fear, that they shall never see one another's faces again; and especially that those, whom they dearly love and honour for their eminent usefulness to the church, are going to suffer bonds and cruelties, and death itself, for the sake of Christ! And with what tenderness are his servants affected, almost to the breaking of their hearts, when their fellow Christians weep and mourn, and would dissuade them from the way of duty, to avoid the sufferings that God calls them to! But it is the noblest fortitude and Christian heroism, in the midst of such melting circumstances and formidable prospects, to be ready, not only to be bound, but even to die for the name of the Lord Jesus; and in such cases, it becomes the lovers of Christ to acquiesce, and say, The will of the Lord be done. But, alas! how many are the weaknesses and prejudices of thousands that believe; and how difficult is it to know the due measures of condescension to them on one hand, in things that, all circumstances considered, are as indifferent as *Mosaic* ceremonies were for a time to the *Jews*; or of zealously appearing for Christian liberty on the other! And how uncertain are the events of the most cautious and prudent conduct in such cases! However, this we may be sure of, that there is no end of complying with ignorant, determined, and ungodly bigots, who, right or wrong, will be enraged against the true ministers of Jesus Christ, and maliciously and falsely accuse them, rather than not incense people against them. How violent and threatening is their fury; and what confusion and injustice is there in popular tumults! But in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. How seasonably doth he appear and raise up instruments, even from among them that do not know him, for delivering his servants, as he did *Paul*, by means of the chief captain, out of the hands of wicked and unreasonable men, and for accomplishing the great purposes of his providence in spreading the gospel, and giving them opportunities and assistances to vindicate their own innocence, and plead for Christ, as well as for themselves!

C H A P. XXII.

Paul, in making his defence at Jerusalem, gives an account of his Jewish extract, education, and former bigamy, 1,—5. Of his miraculous conversion, 6,—11. Of his being baptized and further instructed by Ananias, 12,—16. And of his being afterwards called immediately from heaven to the apostleship among the Gentiles, 17,—21. Hereupon the Jews fly into a violent passion against him, 22, 23. He is rescued a second time out of their hands by the chief captain, and ordered to be bound and examined by scourging, 24, 25. But he, claiming the privilege of a Roman, escapes the torture, and is freed from his bonds, and brought before the council, 26,—30.

TEXT.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

PARAPHRASE.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, whatever your thoughts be of me, I consider you as rational creatures, capable of reflecting on what I am about to say, and of exercising humanity toward me; I likewise regard you with the affection of a brother, as we all are of the same Jewish nation, hope in the same promises, and worship the same God; and I maintain the duty and reverence of a son toward those of you that are of superior character, as fathers in Israel, who, as is to be supposed, have a paternal affection for descendants from among yourselves: I beseech you therefore to attend, with diligence, impartiality, and candour, to the apology, (*απολογία*) I would now offer to every one of you for myself, and the doctrine I preach and practise.

1 And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,

2 And when they heard that he addressed, and called out to them, (*προσφωνῶ*) in the Hebrew dialect, which they familiarly understood, and was indeed their own mother tongue, and by his speaking in which, they perceived that he was not an *Hellenist*, but a *Hebrew Jew*, they were the rather silent, that they might listen to him: And, having thus engaged their attention, he proceeded in the following manner:

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous

3 I am not only a *man*, who, as such, ought to have the liberty of judging for myself, and to be treated with justice and compassion; but, as is well known, I am really one of your own nation, a true born Jew; the place of my nativity was *Tarsus*, the metropolis of *Cilicia*, but I was bred and educated in this very city, the chief seat of Jewish learning and religion, under the tuition of the celebrated *Gamaliel*, (chap. v. 34.) that eminent *Pharisee*, and profound doctor of the law *, at whose feet I sat, as

one

N O T E.

* The apostle here refers to the Jewish custom in their schools, where the learners

zealous towards
God, as ye all are
this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

one of his disciples, to receive his instructions with a humble and teachable disposition of mind; and by him was I led into the most critical and accurate (*κατακριτικῶς*) principles and institutions of the divine law, which was given to, and observed by, our ancient fathers; yea, being myself a *Pharisee*, (chap. xxvi. 5.) I learnt, and thoroughly understood and embraced, the traditions of the elders, that have been handed down from age to age; (*Gal. i. 14.*) and was exceeding zealous for all those things, with a conscience toward God, as ye now generally are, and to as great a degree as any of you can pretend to be at this very day.

4 And so flagrant was my zeal, that, as to the Christian religion, which I now, through divine grace, have received, and am authorized to preach, I resolved, if possible, to root it out of the church and the world, and rather to die myself, than suffer it to live; and, in the madness of my zeal, I breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord Jesus, wherever I went; (*chap. ix. 1.*) inasmuch that I persecuted them unto death, seizing and binding them, like criminals, and haling them to jails, that they might either recant, or die for their principles and profession, whether they were men or women, without shewing the least compassion even to the tender sex.

5 This is an undeniable fact, as even the high-priest himself, and the whole body of that venerable assembly, the great sanhedrim, can testify concerning me, if they please; to whom I was well known as an active famous zealot, the fittest that could be met with to serve such a turn; and from whom, upon my applying to them, I received warrants, (*chap. ix. 2.*) which they wrote, and directed to their brethren, the *Jewish* rulers of the synagogues at *Damascus*, to be aiding and assisting to me in the unmerciful work for which I was sent: And, with these severe credentials, I set out for that city to apprehend all the Christians I could light on there, and bring them bound along with me back to *Jerusalem*, in order to their being proceeded against to the utmost extremity, as apostates and blasphemers of the law of *Moses*. And, had I been left to myself, I should certainly have made them feel the weight of my fury, and still have continued as inveterate an enemy to the gospel, and the professors of it, as ever; all my notions, temper and prejudices, secular interests and honour, then lying directly against it.

6 But

NOTE.

learners used to sit either upon benches, or upon mats on the floor, at the feet of their masters, whose seats were elevated above them.

6 And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Whom art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

6 But (2d) the Lord Jesus himself interposed, in a most immediate and extraordinary manner, to prevent me with his mercy, and to make a happy change upon my heart and views; for while I was travelling on the road, with a full resolution to execute my commission with the utmost rigour, and drew near to *Damascus*, about the middle of a most memorable day, all on a sudden an exceeding great, supernatural, and divine light darted down from heaven, and shone with surprising brightness upon, and all around me, far surpassing that of the sun, in its unclouded lustre, at high noon. (*Chap. xxvi. 13.*)

7 And I thereupon, through terror and amazement, immediately fell down to the earth, as unable to bear the heavenly and awful splendor; and at the same time I heard a voice distinctly pronouncing my name, and saying to me, with great earnestness, in the Hebrew tongue, (*chap. xxvi. 14.*) *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Meaning, as I afterwards understood it, Why are you such a desperate enemy to me, and so violently enraged against my members, as to be set upon cruelly persecuting them, whom I esteem as parts of myself, whose cause and mine is one and the same, and whose afflictions, for my sake, I resent, as if they were laid upon myself personally? What good reason can you have for this? Or what but ruin to your own soul can you get by it?

8 Then, as soon as I could recover myself, I replied, under full conviction of its being a divine voice particularly directed to myself, Lord, who art thou, that speakest in this solemn and moving language to me? Let me, I beseech thee, know thy name, and wherein I persecute thee. In answer hereunto he said to me, I am the true Messiah, the only Saviour, who, in the days of my flesh, was called, by way of derision and contempt, *Jesus of Nazareth*; and, as if it were not enough that I was abused in person, and crucified by men of your malignant spirit, you are now persecuting me in my disciples, and in my religion, name, and character, while I myself am got beyond your reach.

9 And as it is impossible that I should be mistaken in what I thus plainly saw and heard; so, my fellow-travellers, who were to assist me in my persecuting design, can bear me witness, that this was no fancy or delusion: For they themselves really saw the illustrious light, and were so exceedingly terrified at it, that they fell down to the ground as well as I; (*chap. xxvi. 14.*) and they heard the sound of a voice, but did not hear the articulate words of him that spoke, so as to understand their meaning, which were direct-

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I

could not see for

the glory of that

light, being led by

the hand of them

that were with me,

I came into Da-

mascus.

12 And one An-

anias, a devout

man according to

the law, having a

good report of all

the Jews which

dwelt there,

13 Came unto

me, and stood, and

said unto me, Bro-

ther Saul, receive

thy sight. And

the same hour I

looked

up, and saw him.

14 And he said

unto me, Brother

Saul, arise, and

go; and when thou

shalt come, thou

shalt be purified.

15 And now arise,

and go into Jeru-

salem; and there

shalt thou say

testimony of these

things.

16 And when I

came again to Jeru-

salem, the Jews

took me, and circum-

cised me; and they

said, Saul is become

believer.

17 And the next

day he stood with

us, and said, Bre-

thers, ye see how

great a sign and

wonders God hath

done by me, when

I have obeyed his

ed and conveyed in their distinct pronounciation, not to them, but me. (See the note on chap. ix. 7.)

10 Then, being thoroughly satisfied of the reality and importance of what the dear and glorious Saviour said to me, and being deeply humbled under a sense of my own guilt and vileness, and afraid of the terrible consequence, I replied in the anguish of my soul, Lord, I am quite confounded at the thought of what I have been doing against thee; but am now ready to hear and obey whatsoever thou shalt command me; I humbly entreat thee to tell me what course thou wouldst have me take to undo, as much as possible, what I have done, and to escape thy wrath, and find favour with thee. In answer to which, the Lord Jesus spoke distinctly to me again, saying, Get up from your prostration on the ground, and pursue your journey to Damascus; whither you was going on the worst of errands; and there you shall have an account from a certain man, under my special direction, of every thing that, for the present, I have appointed you to be acquainted with, and to put in practice, for my honour, and the good of your own and others souls.

11 And as I was struck blind by the dazzling lustre which darted directly upon mine eyes, and was too strong for them to bear, some of the company, whose sight was not affected like mine, taking compassion upon me, acted the part of kind guides; and under their conduct, who led me by the hand, I arrived safely at Damascus, for much better purposes than those with which I set out for that city.

12 Accordingly, in the event, three days after I came thither, (chap. ix. 9.) a certain man, Ananias by name, who was a truly religious person*, and a devout observer of the law of Moses, and yet a faithful believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who was a man of considerable note, and of an unblemished character, among all the Jews that resided in those parts.

13 This excellent man, being directed by an extraordinary vision from heaven, in which the Lord Jesus told him the circumstances of my case, (chap. ix. 10, — 16.) came to me, and standing before me, and laying his hands upon me, (chap. ix. 17.) accom-

NOTE

* A devout man according to the law, our fathers, I rather incline to think (αὐτὸς εὐσεβὴς κατὰ τὸν νόμον) seems to that he was a converted Jew; but have be the description of a proselyte of right formed the paraphrase in such a manner, teousness; and yet as Ananias after- as may be applied to a person of either wards, ver. 13. 14. calls Saul his brother of these characters, without determining iber, and the God of Israel, the God of one way or the other.

looked up upon him. ed me after the following manner, My dear brother Saul, though you have hitherto been a terror to our churches, I now love and receive you, as one whom I know Christ has received into his family; and I rejoice to tell you, that our great Lord has sent me with a commission to restore your sight, which you lost by the splendor of his glory, that overpowered it in your way to this place; accordingly, in his name, and by his authority, I now say unto you, (*αὐτὸς λέγει*) Lift up your eyes, receive your sight again, and look at me: And at that very instant, through the power of Christ which accompanied his words, I looked up; and something, like fish-scales, falling from mine eyes, (*chap. ix. 18.*) I beheld him as plainly as ever I could have done before.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.

14 Then he delivered his message, with which he was charged for my further instruction, saying to this effect, The only living and true God, who made his covenant with, and was adored by, our venerable ancestors, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and by all our godly predecessors, has, in his eternal counsels, graciously chosen you for himself, that you might be brought to the saving knowledge of his mind and will, in and through his Son; and that, in due time, you might have a miraculous sight of the person of that Jesus who met and spoke to you on the road, and is, by way of eminence in himself, and in his performances, the just or righteous One, how much soever you, and others of his enemies, have reviled and treated him as an impostor; and that you might again hear his voice, and receive a further commission, and more abundant revelations from his own mouth. (*Gal. i. 12.*)

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

15 For I am commanded to tell you, that you shall have this, as well as all other peculiar qualifications of an apostle, (see the note on *chap. ix. 17.*) in order to your publicly testifying unto all nations, and all ranks of people among them, (*chap. ix. 15.*) both what you have already been, and hereafter shall be an eye and ear-witness of.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of our Lord.

16 And now, Why should you any longer defer devoting yourself to him and his service, according to his institution? Up, and be doing; set forward for your important work; and, in order hereunto, visibly own and honour him, by being baptized in his name, in obedience to his authority, and in testimony of your faith in him, and of your being cleansed from the guilt and defilement of your sins, by pardoning and sanctifying grace; and let your religious and fiducial addresses be made to him, as the only Saviour, that all the covenant blessings may be conferred on

you, and all the duties performed by you, which are signified by Christian baptism.

17 And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned, and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee.

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

17 Now, (21) according to the forementioned prediction of *Ananias*, (ver. 14, 15.) it was graciously ordered several years afterwards, (see the note on chap. ix. 17.) that when I returned to *Jerusalem*, even while I was one day pouring out my heart before the Lord, by solemn prayer in the temple, (which shews my veneration for that holy place) I then fell into a divine ecstasy, my eyes being open and awake, to behold the representations that, in a supernatural way, were made to me.

18 And I therein evidently saw the person of the Lord Jesus himself, and plainly heard him saying to me, in words of the following purport, Go forthwith out of the temple; and, instead of staying to preach the gospel at *Jerusalem*, be as expeditious as you can, in departing from it, to carry on your work elsewhere: For the inhabitants of this city are so perverse and prejudiced against me, that they will not attend to, and believe the doctrine of salvation, which I have made known to you, and which chiefly consists in the testimony that you, as an apostle, are to bear to my name, as the crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour.

19 Then I, surprised at this declaration, and loth to entertain any hard thoughts of my dear countrymen, and kindred after the flesh, whose salvation I passionately long for, (*Rom. ix. 1, — 3.*) humbly pleaded in their favour, saying, Lord, I had great hopes of being very useful to this people, and of their regarding thy gracious message; as delivered by me, rather than by others of thine apostles: For it is universally known among them, that I formerly was such a blind, bigotted, and bitter enemy to thee, and to thy interest, cause, and people, as to be uncommonly vigorous and active in searching out the believers on thy name, and dragging them to prisons; and in bringing them to be infamously treated, and scourged in every synagogue, wherever I came and found any of them.

20 And particularly when thy servant *Stephen*, that eminent disciple and evangelist, who was the first martyr for thee, was stoned to death, it is notorious, especially here at *Jerusalem*, that I was present as one of the most zealous to vote against him, and to concur in bringing him to his tragical end; and that to shew how mightily I was pleased with it, I took care of the garments of those who stript themselves for the murderous execution. This people therefore have the greatest reason to believe, that it is merely from

from a supernatural change, which thy all-conquering grace has made upon my heart, that I now believe in thee, and preach the faith, which, as they all know, I once destroyed; and so they will probably be the better disposed to hear me.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

21 And yet, after all that I could say in good will to my brethren the Jews; he, who knows the hearts of all men, and them that are his, and has a right to send his gospel, and make it effectual wherever he pleases, saw that they would rather count me an apostate, and be the more irritated against me, for espousing his cause, than be induced to regard my testimony; and therefore he still insisted, that I should quit Jerusalem without any further disputing, or delay: For, said he, I will send you from hence into far distant countries, to turn the idolatrous Gentiles; from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan to God. (Chap. xxvi. 18.)

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

22 The Jews heard all this discourse with tolerable patience, till the apostle came to mention his being sent to the Gentiles; but then they were so terribly exasperated, that, to drown his voice, and express their indignation and scorn at the thought of such favours being shewn to mere heathens, whom they had in the utmost abhorrence and contempt, they cried out in a tumultuous manner, with abundance of noise and fury, Away with this worthless, pestilent fellow, who talks of preferring idolaters to us, the only people of God: We cannot bear to look at him; let him be hanged up and cut off from the earth: For it is by no means reasonable, fit, or safe, that such a wretch should live any longer.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

23 And while they thus outrageously clamoured against him, and some of them, in token of their utmost detestation, stript off their garments, in order to their stoning him to death, as an apostate and blasphemer; and others threw dust about in the air, as if they would smother and bury him alive; and all of them were so mad against him, that they knew not how to contain themselves, and nothing less was to be expected, than that they would immediately murder him;

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging: that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

24 *Lyfias* the Roman officer, partly from a principle of honour, partly from fear of ill consequences to himself, in case he should suffer *Paul* to be massacred in his presence, and partly from apprehensions that he might possibly have been guilty of some notorious crime, and apparently under the influence of the over-ruling providence of God, who takes care of his servants in times of the greatest danger, ordered his soldiers to rescue him out of their hands, and conduct

καταγομιλῶν αὐτὸν
καὶ λέγων· ἰδοὺ
ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος
ὃν ἐζητοῦμεν·

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ· καὶ
ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

25 And as they
bound him with
thongs, Paul said
unto the centurion
that stood by, Is it
lawful for you to
scourge a man that
is a Roman, and
uncondemned?

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ· καὶ
ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

26 When the
centurion heard
that, he went and
told the chief cap-
tain, saying, Take
heed what thou
doest; for this man
is a Roman.

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ· καὶ
ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

καὶ ὁ κενταurio
ἐλάλῃ αὐτῷ·

28 And the chief
captain answered,
With

conduct him forwards into the tower of Antonia, and then, instead of calling his adversaries to a severe account, as they deserved, for their tumultuous, unlawful, and shameful treatment of his prisoner, he unjustly ordered him to be strictly examined under the lash, to make him accuse himself, and to extort a confession from his own mouth, of what incurring misdemeanors were chargeable upon him, that by this cruel means he might be satisfied about the reason of the violent rage of the Jews, in which they with so much indignation cried out, Shame upon him; kill him out of the way.

25 But while the soldiers were stretching out his arms, and fastening him with leathern straps to the whipping post, (*αὐτὸν δὲ προσδεῖν αὐτοῖς τοῖς κλάδοις*) in order to his being scourged with rods*, the apostle turning to the centurion, who stood by to see his superior officer's commands executed, said to him, with a calm dispassionate temper, and not merely for his own sake, who was ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus, (chap. xxi. 13.) but chiefly for the cause of righteousness and civil liberty, which he on all occasions strenuously asserted, (chap. xvi. 37. and xv. 10, 11.) Have you any legal authority to put a Roman citizen to the torture, in this ignominious manner, to force a confession from him, and that before he has been tried, convicted, and condemned for any fault?

26 The centurion, hearing him speak in this manner, was startled at it; and, going immediately to his captain, said, It will be necessary, Sir, to proceed with prudence, lenity, and caution, in what you order to be done to this man; it behoves you to take good care, that you do not bring yourself into a premunire: For I perceive, by a question he put to me, that, after all, he happens to be a freeman of Rome.

27 Then the chief captain being alarmed with fear, as knowing the severity of the Roman laws against those, that should bind and scourge any of its citizens, especially without a fair trial and legal condemnation, went and spoke courteously to Paul himself, saying, Be so good as to deal frankly with me. Are you indeed a freeman of Rome? Paul answered, Yes, Sir, I really am.

28 The chief captain replied, as being still more amazed at this, than he was that Paul could speak

Greek

NOTE

* A freeman of Rome might be bound with a chain, and beaten with a staff; but it was reckoned an insufferable indignity to bind him with thongs, or scourge him with rods. See Dr. Lardner's credibility of the gospel history Vol. I. page 479.

with a great sum
I this
And
said, But I
free-born.

Greek, (chap. xxi. 37.) Since by what you yourself told me, and by your *Hebrew* speech, but now delivered to the people, (chap. xxi. 39, 40.) you seem to be a *Jew*, and by your appearance one can scarce think that you could purchase this dignity, which cost me a great sum of money, How came you by it? *Paul* answered, I had it not by redemption, but by birth, as the son of a freeman.

Then straight-
ly they departed
from him which
could have exa-
mined him: and
their chief captain
was afraid, as-
he knew that
was a Roman,
because he had
heard him say,

29 Then *Lyfias* believing that what *Paul* said was true, immediately ordered those, that were going to examine him by scourging, to unbind and let him alone; which they accordingly did, and went their way, not without some fear that they had been too active in putting those indignities upon him: And when *Lyfias*, their chief commanding officer, came to know him to be a *Roman* citizen, he also was in a terrible fright, lest he himself should feel the severe resentments of the government, because he had rashly ordered him to be bound and beaten, before he had inquired into his character, or heard what he had to say in his own behalf.

On the
new, because
would have
own the cer-
tainty wherefore
was accused
the Jews, he
set him from
hands, and
demanded the
of priests and
their council
appear, and
right *Paul*
on, and set
before them.

30 And the next day, being desirous to know with certainty, and in the most unexceptionable manner, what the crimes were, that had so highly provoked the *Jews*, and that they could really lay to his prisoner's charge, he took a more prudent, equitable, and wary course than before, more unexceptionable in its own nature, more safe to himself, and as obliging as possible to the *Jews*: He set the apostle at liberty from his bonds, that he might not seem to pre-judge him; and then called the chief-priests, (see the note on chap. ix. 14.) and the rest of the *sanhedrim* together, to hear and examine him in full council: and, bringing *Paul* down from the prison, placed him before them, that he might have free leave to speak for himself, and they to make their objections against him.

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what prudence and temper, courage and faithfulness, is the cause of Christ maintained against its most malicious opposers! And alas, with what furious

NOTE.

Paul seems to have been free-born, by virtue of his nativity at *Tarsus*, which had been supposed by many: For had it been a *Roman* colony, vested with the citizenship of *Rome*, they must have known it; and consequently could not have wondered how he came by it, since he had told him-
self, chap. xxi. 39. that he was a *Jew*. But, perhaps, he was born of parents that had obtained this pri-

vilege, as several *Jews* had in those days, for some remarkable services to the commonwealth: See *ibid.* p. 483.—493. If so, *Paul* was one of those free-men whom the *Romans* called *Libertini*, as being the children of such as had been made free, in distinction from the *Liberti*, who had been made free themselves, and from the *Ingenui*, who were born of parents that had been always free. See *Kennet's Roman antig.* page 97.

ous zeal are blind bigots inflamed against it, even to the persecuting of its professors unto death! But how much better is their sense of things, when God reaches their hearts by converting grace, which, in a spiritual sense, carries all the evidence of a light shining round about them, and of a voice speaking to them! Many indeed may see something of this light, and hear something confusedly of this voice, like *Paul's* companions in his journey, without thoroughly understanding them; but wherever God has really begun a good work in any souls, whether it be in the usual, or in an extraordinary way, he will lead them, by his providence, to the ordinary means of his appointment and blessing, to carry it on till they come to be acquainted with his will, relating to the further duties that lie before them, and till they come to know that he has chosen them for himself. And if, as was *Paul's* case, they have not been entered into the gospel-covenant in the days of their infancy, they ought to be baptized in token of their purgation from the guilt and pollution of their sins, by the blood and spirit of Christ; and they ought religiously and fiducially to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus, as a divine Saviour. He will shew them the way they should take; and if he calls them to holy ministrations, though they may be rejected by some, he will direct their course elsewhere, and open the hearts of others, though it be in distant countries, and among the most unlikely people, to receive them. But O how impatient are self-conceited zealots, at the thoughts of the freeness and sovereignty of God's grace, in leaving them, and making its way to the most unworthy! And how obstinately do they shut their eyes against the most evident appearances of God's own interposing by his providence and Spirit, to send and succeed his gospel, among people of odious and despicable characters, like the idolatrous heathens! But when violent outrages, on this and such like accounts, threaten the lives of his faithful servants, his over-ruling providence raises up instruments for their protection; in order to which, they may lawfully insist on their civil rights and privileges, as well as other men; and while they stand up for truth and liberty, they shall be owned of God, and often favoured with opportunities of defending his, and their own righteous cause.

C H A P. XXIII.

Paul, in the presence of the council at Jerusalem, solemnly professes his integrity, and has a sharp rencounter with the high-priest, 1.—5. He prudently sets his adversaries at variance one with another, and so brings himself off, 6.—10. The Lord Jesus encourages him in a vision against further troubles that he should meet with at Rome, 11. The Jews conspire against his life, 12.—15. Their wicked design is discovered to Lyllias, the chief captain, and he prevents the execution of it, by sending Paul under a strong guard to Felix the governor of Cæsarea, 16.—35.

TEXT.

AND Paul earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.

PARAPHRASE.

WHEN Paul was brought before the sanhedrin, or great council, at Jerusalem, he looked with undaunted courage upon them; and as, by his former conversation with men of figure and learning, he knew many of their faces, and what their tenets were, he carefully viewed them all around him, to observe what numbers there were of different sects among them, that he might order his cause before them, to the best advantage, for his own safety; and then addressed them in the following manner: Ye men and brethren, before whom I am convened to give account

account of myself, and from whom I would hope for a fair and favourable hearing, as being a man of the same common nature, of the same nation, and descended from the same religious ancestors with yourselves; though I have been extremely misrepresented and vilified, I can solemnly appeal to God, who knows my heart, that in my religion and morals, I have always, abating human infirmities, maintained a conscientious regard to him, and have acted with great sincerity, according to my light, as under his all-seeing eye, in every turn and period of my life, to this very day: While I continued the profession of a Jew, I was, *touching the righteousness of the law, blameless*; (Phil. iii. 6.) and, even in persecuting the Christians, *I verily thought that I ought to do it*: (chap. xxvi. 9.) Afterwards, in my embracing and preaching the faith of Christ, I acted upon the strongest conviction and clearest evidence, in direct contradiction to my former mistaken sentiments and prejudices; (chap. ix. 1,—20.) and I have ever since *served God with a pure conscience*, and been *willing to live honestly*, which I can now rejoice in before him. (2 Tim. i. 3: Heb. xiii. 18. and 2 Cor. i. 12.)

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

2 But (as) the false prophet Zedekiah, smote Micah, the prophet of the Lord, (1 Kings xxii. 24.) and as Pashur, the chief governor of the house of the Lord, smote the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. xx. 1, 2.) and an officer struck the blessed Jesus himself, for his answer to the high priest, (John xviii. 22.) in token of indignation and contempt; so Ananias, the high priest, who was president of this august assembly, was so incensed at Paul's opening his speech with such a free, bold, and solemn protestation of his own integrity, and was so inveterate in his spirit against the gospel, that, calling out to those that stood near him, he imperiously ordered them to strike him on the face for it, to stop his mouth, and not suffer him to go on at that rate; which was accordingly done.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for thou art full of lies, thou resistest the law, and commandest

3 Then Paul being under some emotion of spirit, at such a sudden and illegal abuse, and being likewise under a divine and prophetic impulse, said to him, in language near a-kin to that which his great Lord had used to the scribes and Pharisees, (Matth. xxiii. 27.) Thou hypocrite *, God, in his holy providence, will

N O T E.

* Perhaps the apostle might use this reproachful title, with rather too much warmth of temper, under a violent effort of the law of his members against the law of his mind, according to his command.

plaint, Rom. vii. 23, 24. through inattention, sudden surprise, and high provocation: But if there were a mixture of sinful infirmity in it, I can by no means think that he was so far under the

maiest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

will vindicate his own and my righteous cause, and avenge the injury you have done me, by a terrible stroke of his judgment upon you, who, notwithstanding your specious shew of religion, are but like a whited mud wall, that appears beautiful without, while within, it is nothing but sticks, straws, and dirt: For while you pretend to sit as a judge upon me, to try and convict me in a regular process, according to the law of God, how unjust and unwarrantable is it in you, at the same time, to command me to be stricken, in direct contradiction to a known rule in that law itself, which says, *Thou shalt do no unrighteousness in judgment; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour?* (Lev. xix. 15.) And how could you justifiably use me after this rate, in defiance of all right and equity, without so much as hearing what I have to say for myself, instead of *inquiring diligently* into the merits of the cause, which you ought to have done, according to another rule in the judicial law? (Deut. xvii. 4.)

4 And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

4 Hereupon some that were present in court, having a high veneration for *Ananias's* office-character, and overlooking the notorious injury he had done to the apostle *, said with a taunt, What insolence is this! How durst you speak, with such calumny and contempt, to so sacred a person as the high-priest, whom God has set over his people?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak

5 As soon as *Paul* heard this, he apologized for his expressions, saying, I did not see who it was that ordered me to be struck, nor did I, brethren, consider him as the high-priest, when I uttered those words; if I had, and the prophetic spirit had not moved

N O T E S.

the power of corruption, as to wish evil to the high priest, or denounce the judgments of God against him, from any revengeful passion of his own mind; this being so inconsistent with his own amiable temper and character, and with the very nature and genius of the gospel, and of true grace in the heart. The threatening part of this sentence is therefore to be understood, as delivered by a prophetic impulse, like the imprecations in *Psalms* cix. 6, &c. and on *Alexander* the copper-smith, 2 *Tim.* iv. 14. Accordingly several expositors, *Grotius*, *Whitby*, and others, have taken notice, that this prediction was fulfilled, either by *Ananias's* being slain; or by his perishing in the siege of *Jerusalem*, or by his being deposed and sent bound to *Rome*; and so what the apostle said (and came to pass) under divine suggestion, is no ex-

ample to be imitated by others, as speaking by their own private spirit.

* Some have thought that the persons who said this, and whom the apostle styles *brethren*, in the next verse, were believing *Jews*, that were zealous for the law, and consequently for the honour of the high priest. But as *brethren* was a common salutation, and the apostle had used it toward the council in his entrance on his defence, ver. 1. and resumes it, ver. 6.; and as his behaviour lay immediately under their cognizance, it is very questionable whether the believing *Jews* would interpose, and so publicly take the high priest's part against him; especially since they could not but know, that the high priest and council were then striking at the whole cause of Christianity itself through the apostle's sides.

and speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

moved me to express myself as I did, I should not have taken the liberty to speak in so severe and disrespectful a manner to him, how injuriously soever he had treated me*: For, as I said before, (*ver. 1.*) that I have lived in all good conscience before God to this day; so I should have paid a religious regard to that injunction of the law, which, to keep up a just reverence for magistracy, in ordinary cases, says, *Thou shalt not revile, or speak dishonourably of the gods, or judges; nor curse, or denounce menacing sentences against, the rulers of thy people.* (*Exod. xxii. 28.*)

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of

6 Now (*21*) when Paul perceived, by the observation he had made, (*ver. 1.*) that one part of this assembly consisted of *Sadducees*, and another of *Pharisees*, so as to be pretty equally divided between both; he, in his great penetration, judged that a fair opportunity offered to disconcert their measures against him, by setting them at variance among themselves; and therefore, raising his voice, he spoke aloud in the

O O 2

presence

N O T E.

* The paraphrase on the former part of this verse, is formed to comport with the two most prevailing sentiments of expositors upon it; some of which consider it as an *excuse*, and others as a *justification* of what the apostle had said. They that take it for an *excuse* and *retraction*, suppose him to own that he really did not know *Ananias* to be the high priest, in ignorance of which might be occasioned by his having been for some years absent from *Jerusalem*, and by the high priest's not appearing in his distinguishing place, or vestments: And Dr. Whitby supposes, that though the apostle, acting as a prophet, was not under the obligation of the recited law, as others were; yet, the prophetic impulse, which was upon him, did not permit him to advert that it was the high priest, lest that law should have restrained him from complying with that impulse. To which I would add, that he might be looking for another way, to observe what parties the council consisted of, when the high priest spoke; and so really did not see, as the word here used sometimes signifies) that it was he who gave the order to smite him. But they that make his answer a *justification* of what he had said, think it highly improbable, that the apostle should not know the high priest, since he had been about seven days in the temple, (*chap. xxi. 27.*) and could hardly fail of seeing him on some of those days, and since, from what is

said, *ver. 6.* he seemed to know a considerable number of the council; and as he at least knew that *Ananias* was one of them who then sat as judges upon him, the law against *reviling the rulers of the people* would have been as much violated by what he uttered, as if he had known him to be the high priest. When therefore the apostle said, (*ver. 21*) *I wist not*, or did not know that he was the high priest, he might mean that, as the death of Christ, and his priesthood in heaven, had put an end to the divine authority of that office on earth, and as the *Romans* had usurped an unlawful power in disposing of it, just as they pleased, and *Ananias* had obtained it by bribery, the apostle did not *own, esteem, or allow* *Ananias* to be high priest; in which senses the verb (*11810*) is sometimes used, as in *Matth. xxv. 12. Rom. vii. 15. 2 Cor. v. 16. and Rev. ii. 24. Vid. Glass. rhetor. sacr. tract. 1. cap. 1.* And it has been observed from *Josephus's* account, (*Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 8. § 1.—4.*) that *Jesus* the son of *Gamaliel*, and not *Ananias*, was in fact the high priest at this time, and that *Ananias* only bore the name of that office, which he once enjoyed, but from which he had been deposed some years before, and that the superintendancy he gained in the council, was owing to artifice, bribery, and corruption; and therefore the apostle *Paul* did not look upon him as the high priest, or as a lawful ruler of the people.

a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

presence of the council, that all might hear him, saying, Men and brethren, as I am one of your own nation, so my education, and religious sentiments have been after the strictest of your sects, which is known by the name of *Pharisees*; I believed, and zealously professed, practised, and promoted the whole system of its tenets all the days of my *Judaism*, and still hold some of its distinguishing principles; my father also was a *Pharisee*: And, according to one grand article of faith among that sect, I am now called to an account, and am to be judged and condemned, for preaching the doctrine of eternal life, and of a resurrection from the dead, in order to a complete possession of it*, the hope of which, by divine grace, I have in myself, and labour, in compassion to the souls of others, to propagate in them, through faith in a risen Redeemer, who has laid the surest ground of hope for it to all that believe in him.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees conceive both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

7 And the apostle's speaking in this manner occasioned a warm debate between the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, according to his expectation and design; in so much that both parties in the council, and among the people, fell out one with the other about this point, and about the apostle for asserting it; some favouring, and others opposing both it and him.

8 For, on one hand, the *Sadducees*, those frequenters of the age, deny that there will be a resurrection of the dead; or that there is any such permanent being, as an angel in the invisible world, or a separate spirit of man, that survives the death of the body, and subsists in a state of disunion from it: But, on the contrary, the *Pharisees*, the most religious sect of the *Jews*, profess to believe the resurrection of the body, and the existence of spiritual beings, both of the angelic and human rank, in the other world.

9 And this difference of opinion gave rise to an exceeding great and contentious clamour among them, in which the doctors of the law, that were of the sect of the *Pharisees*, set themselves against the *Sadducees*, and, in mere opposition to them, wrangled and disputed vehemently in favour of the apostle, saying, As for our parts, we cannot find that any thing has been said or done amiss by this man: But if, as is very possible, a holy angel, or some other good spirit, that belongs to the invisible state, has come with a commission from God, to communicate his mind and will in an extraordinary way, to this *Paul*, according to

NOTE.

* The hope and resurrection of the dead is put, by an *Hendiadys*, for the hope of a resurrection: For this hope manifestly relates to the resurrection of the body to eternal life.

what he has intimated, (*chap. xxii. 6, — 10.*) let us remember and follow our celebrated doctor *Gama-liel's* excellent advice, (*chap. v. 38, 39.*) that we may offer no violence to him, nor reject and oppose his message, lest we be found fighters against God himself.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

10 And when the *Sadducees*, being contrary minded, were horribly provoked to hear how the *Pharisees* sided with the apostle; and when hereupon the two parties fell into tumultuous heats and furious quarrels about him, *Lyfias*, the chief captain, being afraid lest, in the rage of their ungovernable passions, they should murder *Paul*, and even tear him limb from limb, one party pulling to rescue him, and the other to destroy him, commanded a company of soldiers to come down immediately from the castle, and to deliver him by main force out of their hands, and conduct him back again with safety to that strong hold; where he continued still a close prisoner, uncertain in his own mind about what might be the final event. Thus God in his providence remarkably interposed a second time, to preserve him from the most imminent danger.

11 And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, *Paul*: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

11 And, in the next night after all this, the Lord Jesus himself appeared to him in a vision, and, standing by his bed-side, said, for his support and encouragement, *Paul*, whatever distress has befallen you, or you may yet be further apprehensive of, (*chap. xix.*) maintain your trust and confidence in me; be of good comfort, and let nothing terrify you: Whoever neglects or opposes you, I will be with you; and how great soever your troubles be, in bearing witness to me and my cause here at *Jerusalem*, you shall not fall by any of them: For, as I have still further work to do by you, I have determined; and, by my overruling providence, will bring it to pass, that, according to your own heart's desire, (*chap. xix. 21. and Rom. i. 11.*) you shall be sent to *Rome*, the metropolis of the empire, and there shall bear a noble testimony to my name, as you have done here.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed *Paul*.

12 But (*de*) as soon as the following day came on, some desperate ruffians among the *Jews* entered into a most shockingly vile and treacherous conspiracy against the life of this eminently good and holy man, in their implacable enmity to him for his attachment to the cause of Christ; and to make them the more resolute in going through with it, at all adventures, they bound themselves by an oath, wishing that the curse and wrath of God might fall upon them, if they did not assassinate *Paul*, before they should eat one morsel, or drink one drop of any thing whatsoever.

13 And

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders,

and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul."

15 Now therefore ye with the council, signify to the chief captain

that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entred into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions

13 And so deep was the plot laid, that there were above forty of these abandoned wretches that had joined together in this horrid combination to dispatch him without law, or mercy, and directly contrary to all principles of religion, justice, and humanity, how much soever they might pretend to a pious zeal for doing God good service thereby.

14 In pursuance of their execrable design, they went and communicated it to some of the chief priests and elders of the people, who they knew were the most furious and implacable enemies of Christianity, and, notwithstanding their high and sacred characters, would stick at no measures for suppressing it, saying, We have bound ourselves by the severest curse upon soul and body for ever, (*μεθυσας γυναικας*) that we will taste neither food nor drink, (*ver. 12.*) till we have actually killed this pestilent fellow, *Paul*, who we think is too much favoured by *Lyfias*, but is not fit to live.

15 Now therefore we beg that ye would keep our counsel, and, as though ye knew nothing of our intention, would speak to the rest of the sanhedrim, and desire them to join with you in a request to the chief captain, that he would once more order *Paul* to appear before you to-morrow; and, for a pretence, it may be told him, that ye want to hear what the man has to say to some farther evidences, which ye have received against him, and to be more fully and exactly acquainted (*διακινωμεν ακριβως*) with the true state of his case, which, through yesterday's tumult, ye could not come at. And if there be any guilt, as we think there is none, in shedding the blood of such a seditious fellow, we will take it all upon ourselves, who are resolved to dispatch him in his way from the castle, before he gets near the room where the sanhedrim sits, whatever be the consequence.

16 But (*δι*), as no counsel can be too deep for God to search it out, and bring it to light; and as *his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him*; (2 Chron. xvi. 9.) so, by one means or other, the barbarous scheme providentially took air, and came to the knowledge of a young man, who was *Paul's* nephew by mother's side; and as soon as he heard of the snare (*σπασμα*) they had laid for his uncle, and how they were to lie in ambuscade to destroy him, he hastened away to the prison, and, getting access to *Paul*, told him the whole affair:

17 Then, as *Paul* knew the connection of end and means in all divine purposes and promises, and that

centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

13 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not now yield unto them: for there is in wait for him more than forty men, which are bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed

that no proper methods were to be neglected for his own preservation, though the Lord Jesus had absolutely assured him that he should bear witness to him at Rome, (ver. 11.) he prudently desired to speak with the centurion that had him in custody, and then said, I entreat you to conduct this youth to your head-officer; for he has something of importance, which the civil government is concerned in, to acquaint him with.

18 So the centurion, having a respect for Paul, who had always behaved in a becoming manner, ever since he had the charge of him, readily took his nephew along with him, and went himself to introduce him to the chief captain, and said, Paul, your prisoner, just now calling me to him, begged that I would bring this youth to you, who, it seems, can give you an information of something that is of consequence to himself, and to the government; and therefore I thought proper to give him an opportunity of waiting upon you.

19 Then the chief captain, having also a good opinion of Paul, (ver. 29.) and a concern for the interest of the state, laid hold on the young man's hand in a free and familiar manner; and, taking him aside to a private place, that none might over-hear them, he asked him, not in an austere way, but with condescending and friendly courtesy, saying, Well, young man, what is it that you have to inform me of? Do not be dashed, or afraid; but tell me as freely as if ye were speaking to one of your own companions.

20 And the youth, being encouraged by such affable treatment, replied, with great presence of mind, My business is to acquaint you, Sir, that some Jews of considerable note, who are bitter enemies to Paul, your prisoner, have agreed among themselves to desire you to favour them so far, as to bring him down from the castle to-morrow, that he may appear again before the great council for a second hearing, under pretence of wanting to be more critical and exact in their inquiries about him, (*πρὸς αὐτόν*) than they could be in the midst of all the noise and hurry of yesterday's debates.

21 But I beg that you would not be persuaded by them (*πρὸς αὐτοὺς*) to comply with their request: For I can assure you, upon the most certain evidence, that there are above forty desperate men of their cabal, who have entered into a wicked conspiracy against his life, with a design to way-lay him in his passage, before he can get to the room where the sanhedrim meets; and they have been so daring, as to bind themselves with an oath, under a dreadful curse, that

ed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

21 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, *See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.*

23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to *Cæsarea*, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night.

24 And provide them beasts, that they may set *Paul* on, and bring him safe unto *Felix* the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 *Claudius Lysias*, unto the most excellent

that they will take no manner of sustenance, by eating or drinking, till they have accomplished their villainous resolution of assassinating him: And now, having concerted their measures, they are all ready to perpetrate the horrid crime, in expectation of a promise from you to order him to be forth-coming, that they may have an opportunity for it.

22 The chief captain, having heard and believed this story, and being fully convinced of the restless, implacable, and impatient malice of the *Jews* against his prisoner, dismissed the young man, and, strictly commanding him to keep his own counsel, said, As ever you value the life and safety of this person, and would have the pernicious designs of his enemies defeated, be sure that you tell no one living, except *Paul* himself, that you have discovered these things to me; and I will take effectual care of him.

23 And, as soon as the youth was gone, *Lysias*, fearing that these malignants would never be quiet, till, by some means or other, they had murdered *Paul*, and that he himself should thereby be brought into a scrape, called two of the centurions, that were under his command, and gave orders to them, saying, Go forthwith, and get ready your two hundred foot soldiers, that they may march to *Cæsarea* of *Palestine*; and, together with them, let there be seventy horsemen, and two hundred pikemen; and see that they all set out by nine o'clock this evening.

24 Take care likewise that *Paul*, the famous prisoner in the castle, who is to go with you, be not put to the fatigue of travelling on foot, but be accommodated with a proper beast to ride upon*, and civilly treated; and that he be guarded with all possible safety, and delivered to *Felix* the governor of *Judea*, who resides at *Cæsarea*. Thus Providence ordered that public honour should be paid to this eminent servant of Christ, even in his bonds, as well as that the promise of his going to *Rome*, (ver. 11.) might be fulfilled, in spite of all conspirators against him.

25 And while the soldiers were getting ready, the chief captain wrote a letter of the following purport, to be sent along with them;

26 *Claudius Lysias*, military tribune at *Jerusalem*, sends his most humble and respectful salutations, wishing

NOTE

* *Beasts* may either signify only one beast, (see the notes on *Matth.* xxi. 7. and xxvii. 44.) one being sufficient to carry *Paul* to *Cæsarea*, which was but about thirty-five miles from *Jerusalem*;

or there might be more than one provided, for him to make his choice, or for such of his friends to ride upon as might be desirous to attend him in his journey.

excellent governor Felix, *senteth greeting.*

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law; but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

wishing all manner of prosperity to the most noble Felix, (*ἀγατῆρα*) the proconsul of Judea, at his court in *Cæsarea*.

27 The man who attends these lines, as a prisoner under guard, was, the day before yesterday, (*ver. 10, 11, 12.* compared with chap. xxii. 30.) violently and tumultuously seized upon in the temple by the Jews; and they were so outrageous against him, that there was the utmost danger of his being murdered by them: As soon as I heard of this, I, being in duty bound to suppress all riots, and preserve the peace of the city, went immediately with a number of forces to quell the mob, and, taking him under my protection, delivered him out of their hands; and I have the greater pleasure in reflection upon this seasonable rescue, having afterwards learnt that he is a freeman of *Rome*, and therefore ought the rather to be screened from insults and abuses.

28 However, being desirous (*βουλόμενος δὲ*) to manage with the utmost impartiality between the Jews and the prisoner, and to hear what crime they had to lay to his charge, that so enraged them against him, I brought him the next day, (*chap. xxii. 30.*) before their sanhedrim, that they might fairly examine him, and not complain of being bore down by military power, to prevent a legal process against him.

29 Whom, as I found by their debates, they charged with violating some points of their law relating to religious rites and ceremonies, and with preaching the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead; (*ver. 6.*) but I could not perceive that they so much as pretended to accuse him of any one fact, which, by the *Roman* law, deserves to be punished with death, or even so much as with imprisonment, or bonds.

30 But (*δὲ*) being certainly informed, after all this, that a considerable number of enraged Jews had entered into a desperate conspiracy, and concerted measures to assassinate him, I determined, for preventing the execution of such a barbarous, as well as illegal design, to send him away immediately, as I now do, to your Excellency; and that the Jews may have no pretence of oppression, or grievance, I have ordered his prosecutors to go with their witnesses, and offer what they have to object against him, before

NOTE

* *Lyfas* made a fair representation of the state of *Paul's* case; only, as he was not obliged to accuse himself, he concealed his own false step, in ordering him to be examined by scourging; *chap. xxii. 24.* &c. but his reflection on this might be an inducement to his writing the more tenderly about the prisoner.

before your Excellency, that you, upon hearing both sides, may judge of the merits of the cause, and give sentence upon it according to law. May all health and happiness attend you!

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

31 Then the soldiers, in obedience to their orders, set out with the letter, and, taking Paul into their custody, conducted him in the night, to prevent an insurrection, as far as Antipatris, a city which, being rebuilt by Herod the Great, was so called in honour of his father, whose name was Antipater, and lay seventeen or eighteen miles from Jerusalem, about half way to Cesarea.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle.

32 On the morrow, leaving him to the care of the horsemen, who were to escort him the rest of the journey, the two companies of foot soldiers, and pikemen, apprehending that there was no further danger of a rescue, returned to their respective posts at the tower of Antonia.

33 Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

33 The horse soldiers accordingly proceeded forward with their prisoner; and when they arrived at Cesarea, they delivered the letter, which Lyfias had sent by them to Felix, the governor, and, together with it, brought Paul before him; and so resigned up their charge.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

34, 35 And as soon as Felix had perused the letter, which mentioned Paul as a citizen of Rome, he asked him what Roman province he belonged to. And being told that he was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, which was under his own jurisdiction, he, turning to the apostle, said, I will give you a fair and thorough hearing, (*διακουρεμας σου*) according to the laws of the empire, as soon as those, that have accused you of certain crimes, shall be likewise present, as I perceive they will be ere long, that what both parties have to offer may be impartially considered. And Felix was so far wrought upon by Lyfias's letter, as, in the meanwhile, to shew Paul so much favour as to order him to be confined, not in the common jail, but in an apartment of the palace, which was built by Herod the Great, and in which courts of justice were wont to be held, and so bore the name of Herod's judgment-hall.

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How desirable is it to be able to appeal to God, that we have lived in all good conscience before him; and how unrighteous is it to abuse an honest man for professing that, according to his light, he has done so! But He, who knows the heart, will vindicate the cause of his faithful servants to the confusion of their enemies, be their characters ever so great and venerable among men. However, in ordinary cases, we are not to speak evil of those that are known to be set in authority over us; and when they call us to an account, how much wiser and better is it, to divide their counsels, than revile their persons, and to do this by maintaining any important article of faith, like that of the resurrection of the dead, which

was owned by the *Pharisees* themselves, though denied by the *Sadducees*: If such a prudent method of self-preservation, and openly avowing any truth of the gospel, should enrage some against us, God may turn it into a means of making others, even of his and our enemies, to stand up for us; and if by this means tumults should rise so high in quarrels about us, as to threaten immediate death to ourselves; yet he, who has appointed civil government for our protection, while we are followers of that which is good; and has all hearts in his hands, can spirit secular powers to interpose, according to their duty, for our safety, and can easily over-rule the most dangerous circumstances for giving us favour in their sight. And why should we be afraid, if the Lord Jesus himself will stand by us for our present support and comfort, and for further preservation to fulfil such services as he has laid out for us? His promises shall certainly be performed by proper and appointed means, maugre all attempts to defeat them. But how desperately wicked and malignant must those wretches be, that, contrary to the law of nature, and of all nations, would murder the man whom they cannot convict in a legal way, and who deserves the best regards? No pretences of religion can ever sanctify such a monstrous villainy. But what a watchful eye has the providence of God upon all their secret plots and conspiracies, to discover and blast them in favour of those whose lives and services are dear to him! And what a dreadful snare do such blind and mad zealots lay for their own souls, who bind themselves under a curse to work the work of iniquities! They do not consider how God can disappoint them, and that, whether they succeed in their impious designs, or not, he will avenge their wickedness on their own heads, and turn all the mischief they intended, to the good of his servants, and to their further usefulness in the world.

C H A P. XXIV.

Tertullus, the orator, comes to Cæsarea, and accuses Paul to Felix of sedition, heresy, and profaning the temple, 1.—9. Paul clears himself of those charges, and defends his behaviour and doctrine, 10.—21. Felix defers the decision of the cause, and gives the apostle more liberty than before, 22, 23. Paul preaches Christ to him, who trembles, and yet detains his prisoner in hopes of a bribe to free him, 24.—26. And, after two years, being turned out of his office, he leaves Paul a prisoner, till Festus succeeds to the government, 27.

TEXT.

AND after five days, Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

PARAPHRASE.

FIVE days after Paul's being first seized in the temple*, (chap. xxi. 27.) Ananias, the high-priest, being so full of malice against him, as to forget the dignity of his own character, went down in all haste from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, with several other members of the sanhedrim; and they carried along with them a certain learned and artful counsellor, *Tertullus* by name, who was well acquainted with the Roman laws and language, to be their advocate: These (*οὗτοι ἐπιστάντες*) appearing in a body before Felix the governor, to give the greater weight to their cause, opened their complaints against Paul.

Q. 2

2, 3 And

NOTE

* These five days seem to be reckoned from the time of Paul's being first apprehended in the temple: For he says, ver. 11, it was but twelve days since he

went to Jerusalem; and as he had spent about seven days there, when the Jews seized him, chap. xxi. 27. if we add seven days to these, they make up twelve.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

¶ Though Felix had been the means of delivering the country from some thieves and impostors; yet ancient historians, both Jews and Heathens, agree, that he was a very wicked, cruel, and covetous man; was guilty of great injustice and oppression toward the Jews; had basely procured the murder of Yona-

2, 3 And when he was called to the bar, the Roman orator, like one that pleaded only for pay, began his speech, in the name of the high-priest and council, with the most fulsome flatteries of the governor, in direct contradiction to his known character, to bias him in their favour; and with false exaggerating charges against the prisoner, to fix an odium upon him, saying, We of the Jewish nation, whose cause I am come to plead, having enjoyed a great deal of peace and liberty, tranquillity and prosperity, under your happy administration *, and many eminent acts of justice and goodness having been performed towards our people by your great penetration and foresight, (*δὲ τὰς οὐκ ἀπορίας*) prudent care and management, most worthy and excellent Felix; we constantly, and every where, on all occasions, receive and reflect upon these tokens of your wisdom, equity, and favour, with the utmost gratitude and acknowledgment, and are thereby encouraged to expect the justice we are come to demand against the criminal now brought before you.

4 But (*δὲ*) that I may not take up too much of your time, nor trespass upon your patience, and upon your modesty, by expatiating on your noble virtues, I humbly and earnestly beseech your Excellency, that, in your great lenity and candour, you would please to attend to, and consider what we have to offer against the prisoner, which we shall sum up as briefly as possible, and in which I doubt not but we shall prove him guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, in attempts to destroy the rites of the Jews, and to disturb the public peace, and subvert the civil government.

5 For, by sad experience, we have often found this infamous man, who now stands arraigned at your bar, to be a most pernicious fellow, spreading infection, (*λοιμὸς*) like the plague, all around him: He even insuffles seditious principles, and stirs up riots and rebellions, among all our countrymen, the Jews, wherever he goes, and can meet with them, through every part of the Roman empire; and is the first broacher, grand abetter, and promoter, of the pestilent heresy (*αἵρεσις*) of the Nazarenes, an upstart

NOTE

than their high-priest, for inveighing against the tyranny of his government; and lived adulterously with Drusilla, who left her own husband to marry him, as commentators have generally observed from *Josephus antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 6. 7. and from *Tacitus hist.* lib. v. cap. 9.

sect, as injurious to the state * as to our church; it having taken its rise from one *Jesus of Nazareth*, who, we all know, was crucified at *Jerusalem* by the *Roman* power, not thirty years ago, for his notoriously seditious principles and practices, and for setting himself up as king of the *Jews*, in opposition to *Cæsar*. (See *John* xix. 12,—16.)

6 The prisoner has likewise been so daring and impious, as to do what in him lay to desile our sacred temple, by bringing uncircumcised *Gentiles* into it: (*chap.* xxi. 28, 29.) For which reason we, impatient of such an abominable affront to our God, and to his house, apprehended him, with a design of bringing him to justice, and were going to try and judge him in an impartial manner, according to our law, which is the rule of our religion, and which, by the favour of the government, we are allowed to observe, and to support, against all that would profanely violate its holy institutions.

7 But before we could enter upon a judicial process, *Lyfias*, the military tribune, who has the chief command of the garrison at *Jerusalem*, rushed in upon us, with a party of soldiers, at unawares, and wrested this criminal out of our hands, in an arbitrary manner, and by main force, and would not suffer us to prosecute him in our own court, but referred us to your tribunal, to which he sent him.

8 In consequence of this, he laid a difficulty and hardship upon the witnesses against this man, by ordering them to undergo the fatigue, expence, and inconvenience of a long journey hither, to bring their allegations against him before your Excellency, who, by hearing their evidence, and examining him upon it, may now easily judge of the merits of the cause, and be thoroughly satisfied about the truth of all the particulars that we have charged him with. Thus impetuously and confidently did *Tertullus* assert, and exaggerate every thing that might make against *Paul*.

9 And though the most invidious falsehood ran through all this oratorical harangue; yet, to add the greater credit to it, and the more deeply to impress the governor's mind, *Ananias* the high-priest, and the elders of the *Jews* then present, (*ver.* 1.) readily concurred in signifying their consent and approbation;

NOTE

* It is a little strange to me, that no expositor, as far as I find, takes notice of the insinuation that *Tertullus* seems to have given, as though the sect of the *Nazarenes* were enemies to the *Roman* government; since nothing could better

suit his artful design of exasperating *Felix* against *Paul*, or of inducing him, as a *Roman* magistrate, to deal by him as *Pilate* had done by *Jesus*, his Lord and Master.

10 Then Paul,

after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

tion; and made no scruple of roundly affirming, that all the facts were certainly true, as *Tertullus* had represented them.

10 Then as, according to the *Roman* law, and even the natural rights of mankind, both parties were to be heard before judgment should be given, the governor intimated to *Paul*, that now was his time to speak; and that he had free liberty to make his defence: Hereupon the apostle, with admirable address and presence of mind, and with as much prudent respect to his judge as was consistent with truth and honesty, replied, Inasmuch as I well know that your Excellency has been for several years in the high and honourable station of a ruler over the *Israelitish* nation, and so cannot be a stranger to the religious rites and customs, temper and spirit, sects and parties, that visibly appear among that people, I, with the greater pleasure and freedom of mind, plead my cause before you, who are so well qualified to judge of the improbability of some facts alledged against me, and will please to make all due allowances, in my favour, for the warmth and prejudices with which my adversaries have brought their accusations against me.

11 For as to that part of the charge which relates to *sedition*, (*ver. 5.*) you may be abundantly assured from many witnesses, and your own knowledge of the times of their festivals may induce you to believe, that it is now no more than twelve days since I came up from distant countries to *Jerusalem*; to perform the religious services at the feast of *Pentecost*, that are conformable to the *Jewish* law, and thereby to testify my brotherly love to those that are most zealous for them.

12, 13 And during the six or seven days, at most, of my being there before my confinement, (see the note on *ver. 11.*) though I daily frequented the temple for religious worship, which, as a *Jew*, I had a right to do, as well as any of my accusers; yet I am bold to aver to your Excellency, in the presence of them all, that it was in the most peaceable and orderly manner; and that they did not so much as once find me there, either contradicting and opposing, or contending and quarrelling with, any one whatsoever, about points of religion, or government, or ever making the least attempt to spirit up the people to tumults or insurrections of any kind; no, nor did they, all that while, ever catch me at practising upon the people, to prejudice them against their civil or ecclesiastical rulers, in any of their other places of worship, such as the synagogues, where they ordinarily meet to hear their laws read and expounded; or in

any part of that famous and populous city: Nor, were these mine accusers put to it, could any of them prove so much as one of the crimes with which they have so boldly and peremptorily charged me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call *heresy*, to worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

14 But as to the *heresy*, (ver. 5.) which they accuse me of, and are pleased to insinuate is of dangerous consequence, both to religion and the civil government, I freely own, Sir, in your presence, and before them all, that in the way, which they have unjustly stigmatized with that infamous brand, I do pay all religious homage to the only living and true God, even the God of all my pious ancestors, whom he took into covenant with himself; and I am induced to take this God of my fathers for my God, and thus solemnly to worship him; because I firmly believe the divine authority of all those doctrines, and the sure accomplishment of all those gracious promises and predictions that are contained in the ancient and venerable writings of *Moses*, and the succeeding prophets, which not only I, but the generality of the *Jews*, profess to receive, as the inspired oracles of God.

15 And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

15 And as I preach none other things than those which *Moses* and the prophets did say should come; (*chap. xxvi. 22.*) so God having fulfilled his great promise made to the fathers, to us their children, by the coming of the Messiah, I have, and profess to have, an entire dependence on the word and power of God, and a joyful expectation from him, through the risen Saviour, with respect to a fundamental article of the Christian faith, which is likewise, in part at least, consented to, and approved of by, the whole nation of the *Jews* themselves, the *Sadducees* excepted, *viz.* That, at the last day, there will be an universal resurrection of the bodies of the dead*, both of the righteous to everlasting life, and of the wicked to everlasting shame and contempt, as was anciently prophesied, (*Dan. xii. 2.*) and was afterwards confirmed, (*John v. 28, 29.*) by that Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom I preach, not as a temporal prince, but as the once crucified, and now living Redeemer, by whose merit and energy, and after whose example, all, that sincerely believe in him, shall be raised to immortal glory.

16 And herein do

16 And for this cause†, in view and prospect of this

NOTES.

* The unjust, says Dr. Whitchy on this place, seems necessarily to be added; because the doctrine of the Pharisees, according to Josephus, restrained the resurrection to the just, condemning the unjust to perpetual torments without any resurrection.

† Herein (*is causa*) may be rendered for this, or for this cause, the preposition *is* being sometimes put for *propter*, as in *Matth. vi. 7. Eph. iii. 13. and Col. ii. 16.* in all which places it manifestly signifies, and in the two first is translated, for.

do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man.

17 Now, after many years, I came to bring mine to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

20 Who ought to have appeared before your Excellency, and to have witnessed against me, if they were able to have proved any crime upon me, which, it is plain by their absence, they could not do; and therefore nothing can be depended upon, nor ought to be admitted in a court of judicature, that is clamorously objected against me.

this solemn and important day, I myself, as I told the great council at *Jerusalem*, (chap. xxiii. 1.) make it the governing care, study, and business of my life and ministry, at all times, in all things, and by all means, under divine influence, to maintain a faithful and peaceful conscience, as in the sight of God, and with a reference to the future judgment, free from all allowed guile, and from all just occasions of inward smitings for known and wilful sin, that in my thoughts, words, and ways, I may neither offend God, nor do any thing injurious to man, whether friend or enemy, but *may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ.* (Phil. i. 10.)

17 Lastly, As to my *profaning the temple*, which is, with equal vehemence, added (ver. 6.) to the charge of sedition and heresy, This is as false as all the rest, and is utterly contrary to all my behaviour in that holy place; the true state of which is this: After many years absence from *Jerusalem*, I came thither within less than a fortnight ago, (ver. 12.) bringing along with me charitable contributions, which I had collected among my friends and brethren in distant parts, for the relief of some of my poor countrymen; (Rom. xv. 25, 26.) and being there, I began to observe the rites of purification, and designed to have offered the sacrifices appointed by the law of *Moses*, for completing a religious vow, which I had made. (Chap. xxi. 24, 26.)

18 While I was thus performing the services belonging to my vow, some *Jews*, that came from the *Lesser Asia*, (chap. xxi. 27.) and knew me when I sojourned in those parts, found me going through the legal methods of purification in the temple, with no more than four persons, who were *Israelites*, and attended me to discharge like obligations, which lay upon them, (chap. xxi. 23, 26.) not in any riotous manner, but with all possible quietness and regularity; only these *Asiatic Jews*, having before seen one *Trophimus*, a *Gentile* convert to Christianity, in the city with me, falsely suggested that I had brought him into the temple: (chap. xxi. 29.) And so not I, but they raised the tumult, and defiled that holy place.

19 These very men ought, in all reason, to have appeared before your Excellency, and to have witnessed against me, if they were able to have proved any crime upon me, which, it is plain by their absence, they could not do; and therefore nothing can be depended upon, nor ought to be admitted in a court of judicature, that is clamorously objected against me.

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lyfias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have

20 Or, since they are not here to confront me, let even these mine adversaries, that are present, speak freely, if they can honestly say, that they found any injurious or unrighteous fact, (*αδυσμα*) made out against me; while I stood before, and was examined by, the *sanhedrim* at *Jerusalem*: I challenge the worst of them all to prove any thing like it;

21 Unless it were; as they themselves could not deny, for this one declaration, in which I glory, and which, though deemed heresy by the *Sadducees*, was avowed by the *Pharisees* in that very council, (*chap. xiii. 7, 8, 9.*) namely, that while I stood among them, I said, with an earnestness suitable to the importance of the point, I am this day called to an account, and am to be judged and condemned by you, for my belief, expectation, and preaching of the resurrection of all mankind from the dead, in order to the complete happiness of the righteous, and punishment of the wicked, in body as well as soul, for ever.

22 Now (*δι*) when *Felix* had given both parties a full hearing, he deferred passing judgment upon the case, because he had a more exact knowledge than they imagined him to have, or than *Lyfias* had, of the state of Christianity, and of the orderly behaviour of its professors, by means of its early settlement at *Cæsarea*, in the conversion of *Cornelius* and his friends, (*chap. x.*) which was followed with the gathering of a church of believers, and with the residence of *Philip* the evangelist there; (*chap. xviii. 22. and xxi. 8.*) * and because he had a mind to inform himself still more accurately, about the nature and tendency of its doctrines, whether they affected the civil government, or not: And as *Paul's* accusers seemed to reflect on the conduct of *Lyfias*, as though he had acted in a forcible and arbitrary manner, when he rescued the prisoner out of their hands, *Felix* took occasion from thence to put the matter off, saying, When *Lyfias*, the tribune, is come, who ought to be present to answer for himself, I will more thoroughly examine into, and then finally decide the cause ye have brought before me.

23 In the mean while, he conceived so good an opinion of *Paul*, that, committing him to the custody of a military officer, who had the command of a hundred soldiers, he ordered this centurion not to keep him

N O T E.

* As *Felix's* having a more perfect knowledge of that way, (*ακριστοτερος υψος τα σημειωσεν*) is thought by some to relate to what knowledge he already had of the state of the Christian religion,

which is manifestly intended by that way; (see *chap. ix. 2. and xxii. 4.*) and by others to the further information he would endeavour to get of it, I have taken both senses into the paraphrase.

have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

him in close confinement, but to let him have liberty to walk about, as a prisoner at large, and not to hinder any of his friends and acquaintance in *Cæsarea*, and the parts adjacent, where there were many Christians, or any others of what country soever, from having free access to converse with him, or to bring him money or victuals, or perform any office of kindness that they had a mind to shew him.

24 And, a few days afterwards, *Felix* coming into the judgment-hall with his lady, whose name was *Drusilla**, and who was of Jewish parents, sent for the apostle, and, together with her, heard what he had to say about the doctrine of Christ, and about what his followers were to believe concerning him, that he might judge whether it contained any principles, that threatened disturbance to the state, and might gratify his own and her curiosity, rather than that they might be instructed, and led in the way to eternal life, for the saving of their own souls.

25 And as the apostle knew the abominable vices that were most predominant in them; (see the note on *ver. 2.*) so when he had given a plain account of the most peculiar and distinguishing points of the gospel, relating to the person and mediation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the way of salvation through faith in him; he, not fearing the faces of these great personages, nor consulting what might best please their curiosity, and subserve his own liberty and safety, proceeded to such a serious and faithful application of his doctrine, as might be best suited, and, by the blessing of God, most effectual, to touch their consciences, and convince them of their wickedness and danger, of their need of Christ, and the impossibility of their being saved, if they persisted in their evil courses: In pursuit of this noble design, *Paul* reasoned with strong evidence, and a moving pathos, about the nature, excellence, and necessity of justice toward men, as well as religion toward God; and about chastity, (*σωφροσύνη*) and a regular government of the passions, affections, and inclinations, in a sober and lawful use of sensitive enjoyments; as also about the certainty, strictness, and solemnity, of a future day of account, in which all must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, (*2 Cor. v. 10.*) and what a terrible day that will be to them, who

though

N O T E.

* *Drusilla* was a daughter of *Herod Agrippa*, and brought up in the Jewish religion; but her virtue was far below her beauty: She being one of the finest women of that age, *Felix* fell in love with her, and persuaded her to forsake her husband, *Aristus* king of *Emesa*, and to be married to himself, though a Pagan. See *Univerf. hist.* Vol. IV. p. 265.

though they have heard of the Saviour, shall then be found in impenitence and unbelief. How little soever *Drusilla* might be impressed by this awful discourse, as vainly trusting to her *Jewish* privileges, under all her wickedness; yet, while *Paul* was delivering it, *Felix's* conscience was so struck and alarmed, in reflection on his own guilt, that, great and haughty as he was, he was perfectly frightened; inasmuch that he trembled for fear of God's wrath; and yet, being still in love with his sins, and desirous to stifle convictions, and get rid of the terrors that attended them, he, instead of inquiring further into the way of deliverance, or crying out with the trembling jailor, *What shall I do to be saved?* (chap. xvi. 30.) dismissed the apostle, saying, Withdraw for the present, other affairs now call me away; when I have more leisure, and a better opportunity, I will send for you again, and hear what you have further to say about these things.

16 He hoped also that money should have been given him of *Paul*, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and conversed with him.

26 And, even at the same time, (*quia de xai*) his heart went so much after his covetousness, like those hypocrites of old, (*Ezek. xxxiii. 31.*) that he was listening and longing for an offer of a bribe from *Paul*, to set him at liberty *, which he hoped a man of his eminence, and interest among the Christians, might easily have procured and proposed; therefore he the more frequently took occasions to send for him, and converse with him, not to hear any more about the faith of Christ, for his own salvation, or about the solemn subjects that had thrown him into agonizing pangs before; but to see whether any thing might turn up for making a good penny of his prisoner.

27 But after two years, Porcius Felix came into Felix's room; and Felix,

27 But while he was thus hoping, in vain, for a good round sum from *Paul*, which neither the apostle, nor any of his friends were suffered, by Providence †, to offer for his discharge, he continued to

R r 2

keep

NOTES.

* *Felix* might the rather hope for a good boon from *Paul*, considering that he had lately collected from the Christians, a large supply for the poor at Jerusalem; (ver. 17.) and that, perhaps, the whole of it might not be as yet disposed of; or, if it were, that the same friends, who entrusted him with that, both could, and would raise a considerable sum for the release of one, who stood so high in their esteem, and was so important to them.

† *Mr. Henry* observes, that though *Paul* had such a great and generous soul, he declined to bid money to *Felix*, or beg

it of the churches; yet they ought to have solicited the governor, and to have given him a fee, if that were necessary, to engage him to do justice to *Paul* in setting him at liberty, rather than let such an eminent and useful man lie in a jail, when a little money would have fetched him out, and restored him to his usefulness again. But, there might be a providence in their not doing it, as *Paul's* bonds were to be for the furtherance of the gospel. And we may add, that this was to be one means of his being sent to Rome, to bear witness to Christ there, according to the prediction, chap. xxiii. 11.

lix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

keep him in custody, for two years together; at the end of which, *Felix*, who sought to please men rather than God, was deposed; and *Porcius Festus* succeeded to the government of *Cæsarea* in his stead. And *Felix*, being desirous to curry favour with the Jews, lest otherways they should accuse him to the emperor of his many oppressions and cruelties, during his administration, (see the note on ver. 2.) was so unjust to *Paul*, as to leave him still a prisoner, though he had nothing to lay to his charge.

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what detestable arts of falsehood, and flattery of *Felix*, did the high priest and elders vent their spleen, in concurrence with *Tertullus* their advocate, against the apostle *Paul*, and the doctrines of the gospel! No scruple was made of calling their own illegal and furious outrage, an attempt to judge him according to their law; or of calling *Lyfias*'s just and necessary interposition, to prevent their murdering him, a taking him out of their hands with violence; nor did they make any difficulty of fawning upon an infamous governor, and extolling him to the skies, that they might soothe his vanity, and engage him to patronize the vile slanders, which they cast on one of the best of men, as though he were a heretic, a seditious fellow, a profaner of the temple, and the very pest of the earth. What will not spite and malice say against the faithful servants of Christ, and against his gospel, to expose them to indignation and contempt! But how just and reasonable is it, that, with a due deference to the civil magistrate, they vindicate themselves, and their doctrine, from all invidious reproach! And what a noble spirit do they discover, when they boldly own the truth, in the face of all opposition and danger, especially truth of the greatest importance, like that of an universal resurrection of mankind from the dead, which is matter of joyful hope to the righteous, though of terror to the wicked! How impossible is it for the enemies of Christianity, to prove their injurious charges upon it, or upon those preachers of it, who are enabled, by divine grace, to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man! Even *Felix* himself, wicked as he was, had so good an opinion of *Paul*, as to relax his bonds, from which indeed he ought to have been entirely released, instead of being retained a prisoner in any form whatsoever: And when the apostle, having opened to him the way of faith in Christ for salvation, came close to his conscience in reasoning with him about righteousness, temperance, and a future judgment, to waken within him a sense of his sin, of his need of a Saviour, and of his obligations to purity and holiness, as ever he would appear with safety and comfort at the bar of God: How did he tremble for fear of divine wrath; and yet how ineffectual were his strong remorse and agonies of mind; and how justified, while they were under the management of a heart in love with sin, and not under the powerful and abiding influences of the Holy Spirit! But O how dangerous is it to fight against present convictions, and put off the great concerns of salvation, to some other pretendedly more convenient season, which the sinner, like *Felix*, may never have a heart to seek, or to improve! And how can it be expected that he should, while he is cultivating such a friendship of this world, as is enmity to God.

C H A P. XXV.

Paul is again accused by the Jews before Festus, 1,—7. He vindicates himself, and, to avoid removing the cause to Jerusalem, appeals to Cæsar, 8,—12. Festus tells the story to king Agrippa, at whose desire to hear the apostle himself, he is brought before him in a grand assembly, 13,—23. And Festus relates the state of his case, in which he declares that he found nothing done by him worthy of death, but leaves him to answer for himself, 24,—27.

TEXT.

NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high priest, and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he

PARAPHRASE.

NOW about three days after Festus came into the province of Judea, to enter upon the administration of the government, as proconsul in the room of Felix, he took an opportunity to go up from Cæsarea, the usual place of the governor's residence, to Jerusalem, which was under his jurisdiction, that he might shew himself, and give proper orders about the management of affairs there.

2 Immediately upon his arrival thither, the high-priest, and some principal members of the Jewish sanhedrim waited upon him in a body, to pay him their compliments; and their hearts were still so full of restless and impatient malice against Paul, that, to prepossess the governor's mind, they represented their quarrel with him in a most invidious and partial light, earnestly entreating him to re-assume the consideration of an affair, which, to their great dissatisfaction, had lain so long dormant, without being brought to any issue; and to give judgment against him as a criminal that deserved to be put to death. (ver. 15, 16.)

3 And instead of asking him to try the merits of the cause, like an upright judge, without favour or affection, they solicited him, with all the arts of vile insinuation, to stand their friend against Paul, and to order him to be brought from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, to be tried before him in the presence of the great council there: And yet, as they might not be able, even then, to carry their point against him, while Festus should be the judge, their true design was only to get an opportunity for way-laying, and murdering him on the road; and so it was just such another villainous artifice as was intended to have been used with Lyfias, in desiring to have him brought from the castle to their court. (Chap. xxiii. 12, —15.)

4 But, whether Festus suspected, or had received any hint of their wicked design; or whether he thought the request to be unreasonable in itself, and derogatory to the honour of his court at Cæsarea; or

he himself would depart shortly thither.

or whatever might be his inducement, God, in his merciful and holy providence, over-ruled his mind for defeating their conspiracy; and inclined him to reply, That as he could see no sufficient cause for taking so extraordinary, unnecessary, and exceptionable a step, as sending for *Paul* back to *Jerusalem*, he should be kept in safe custody at *Cæsarea*, till he might be brought to a fair trial there; and that he himself would soon go thither, and bring it on, without delay.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

5 Therefore, said he, let such of you, be they more or less, as are most capable of setting the cause in its true light, and managing it to the best advantage, or of giving any evidence, as witnesses against him; let any such go down to *Cæsarea* along with me, and offer all that they can, in a legal course, to make good their accusations of him; and ye may depend upon it, that I will certainly grant you impartial justice against him, if any thing capital, or in a lower degree criminal, shall be proved upon him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down into *Cæsarea*, and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded *Paul* to be brought.

6 And when *Felix* had spent the best part of a fortnight with them, and settled his affairs at *Jerusalem*, he set out on his journey, and returned directly to *Cæsarea*: And as several principal men of the *Jews*, that were inveterate against *Paul*, went down with the governor, to carry on their malicious prosecution; he being careful to detain them no longer than needs must, that they might have no occasion to complain of further delay, called a court on the morrow, after his arrival thither, and sitting as judge on the bench, ordered *Paul* to be brought to the bar, that he might take his trial.

7 And when he was come, the *Jews* which came down from *Jerusalem*, stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against *Paul*, which they could not prove.

7 And as soon as the prisoner was arraigned in form, the *Jews* that came down from *Jerusalem* on purpose to appear against him, gathered together to spirit up one another, and intimidate the apostle; and as they stood surrounding him, they with their wonted malice, art, and fury, laid various and heavy crimes to his charge, that they might blacken him as much as possible, though they were not able to support it in any one instance, with the least shew of evidence against him, as *Paul* himself observed;

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the *Jews*, neither against the temple, nor yet against *Cæsar*, have I offended any thing at all.

8 While, in his own defence, he pleaded, as he had before, in the presence of *Felix*, (*chap. xxiv. 12, 13.*) saying, I have been guilty of no offence against the *Jewish* law, as delivered by *Moses*; nor of any profanation of the temple at *Jerusalem*; much less have I been guilty of any seditious practices, to the injury, or disturbance of the civil government, under the *Roman* emperor, to whom I have constantly paid all due allegiance, as becomes a peaceable subject.

defy the very worst of mine enemies to prove any of the things of which they have accused me.

9 Nevertheless, *Festus* being desirous, just upon his accession to the government, to ingratiate himself as much as possible with the *Jews*, by attempting to grant them the favour (*εὖδοι καὶ χάρις αὐταῖς*) which they had asked, (*ver. 3.*) replied to *Paul*, Since I am unacquainted with the nature of several articles (*ver. 20.*) that have been mentioned; and since you are so confident of your own innocence, Are you willing to return back to *Jerusalem*, to be tried there by the *sanhedrim* in my presence *, that I may the better judge of these things, which the *Jews* have accused you of, relating to their religion?

10 Then *Paul*, finding himself in danger of being thrown into the hands of his enemies, who thirsted after his blood; and being encouraged, by the vision he had received, (*chap. xiii. 11.*) to run all risks in going to *Rome*, insisted on his privilege as a *Roman* citizen, saying, I stand arraigned in a court of judicature, which is held by the commission of *Nero* our sovereign, who, as emperor, wears the honourable title of *Cæsar*: I own the authority of his government, and have put the issue of my cause upon it, that it may be judged according to the laws of the empire, by which it ought to be decided; nor is there any occasion for my being sent to be tried by the *sanhedrim* at *Jerusalem*, since I have done no manner of injury to the *Jews*, as your Excellency may be well satisfied from what has now passed in your hearing.

11 If indeed I do any thing contrary to law and justice, (*τι μὲν γὰρ ἀδικῶ*) let me have a fair trial, and be punished according to my deserts; and if it shall be found that I have been guilty of any capital crime, I shall readily submit to whatever death the law appoints in such cases, and freely own the justice of the sentence that shall condemn me to it, without troubling the court with any plea for respite of judgment: But if there be no truth in any one of the accusations they have brought against me, as I am sure there is not, and as sufficiently appears by this, and my former trial, (*chap. xxiv. 10.—21.*) no man, no, not the governor himself, who ought to protect the injured, as well as punish the guilty, has any right to put me into the power of mine enemies, especially after they have

N O T E.

* Here seems to be a plain intimation, that whatever power the *Jews* now had in capital causes, it was exercised under the direction and judgment, in fact with the concurrence, of the

Roman governor, upon his hearing the evidence that was brought against the prisoner, as a transgressor of their laws. See the note on chap. vi. 12.

have given such flagrant proofs of their malice against me. I therefore claim my privilege, as a freeman of Rome; and, whatever be the consequence, I appeal from all other courts to *Cæsar's* immediate tribunal, that I may be judged by his imperial majesty himself, (ver. 21.) choosing rather to be delivered into his hands than theirs. (See the note on chap. xxvi. 32.)

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

12 Then Festus, having consulted (*μετὰ τοῦ συνέδριου*) with his own Roman council*, whose business it was to assist him with their advice in points of law, and in cases of difficulty and importance; and thinking that he could not refuse this claim of privilege, in consistence with the constitution of the empire, or with honour and safety to himself, and that, by complying with it, he should get rid of a troublesome affair, without disobliging the Jews, replied, Well, have you thought proper to appeal to the emperor's supreme court of judicature at Rome? It shall be according to your desire: To *Cæsar* you shall be carried, that you may appear before his Majesty, and know his pleasure. And so all further proceedings being stopt for the present, to the disappointment of the apostle's enemies, who hoped for his death, and of his friends, who hoped for his liberty, the court broke up.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsar, to salute Festus.

13 But (*δὲ*) some time after this, Agrippa, a professed Jew, who was the son of Herod Agrippa, and was king of large territories under the Roman emperor†; he, together with his own sister Bernice, who had likewise been brought up in the Jewish religion, came to Cæsarea to congratulate Festus upon his accession to the government of Judea, and to take the diversions of his court, and establish a good understanding with him.

14 And when they had been there many

14 And as these royal persons continued a considerable time at Cæsarea, Festus, in free conversation one

N O T E S.

* The word here used is not (*εὐαγγελιστὴς*) that, by which the Jewish sanhedrim, or great council, was commonly expressed; but is (*συμβουλευτὴς*) a word of indeterminate signification: And as there is no likelihood, that the Jewish council would advise Festus to send Paul to Rome; so it is certain that the Roman presidents, or governors of provinces, had a council of their own, to consult with on proper occasions. See Lardner's *Credibility*, &c. Vol. I. p. 215. &c.

† Herod Agrippa, who slew the apostle James with the sword, chap. xii. 1, 2. appeared to be a zealous Jew, and educated his children in the Jewish reli-

gion. The emperors Claudius and Nero made this young Agrippa, his son, king of the tetrarchy which formerly belonged to Philip, (see Luke iii. 1. and the note there) as also of Lyfania, and part of Galilee, &c. And, by the permission of the emperor, he had the direction of the sacred treasure, the government of the temple, and the right of nominating the high priest, and was himself a zealous observer of the Jewish religion, and an excellent prince, of great generosity and clemency.—Bernice was one of the daughters of Herod Agrippa; but a lady of no good character. See *ibid.* Vol. I. p. 32, 39.—42.; and *Universal hist.* Vol. IV. p. 261, and 265.

many days. Festus declared. Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow, I sat on the judgment-seat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth.

18 Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had certain questions against

one day with the king, related the state of Paul's case to him, saying, There is a certain noted man, who has made a great noise in the world, and was taken up on occasion of some offences that he had given to the Jews, and whom Felix, my predecessor, left in custody at his resigning the government.

15 When I went to Jerusalem, soon after my coming into this province, the present high priest (*ver. 2.*) together with the chief priests, and several other members of the great council, immediately applied to me about this man, telling me of various crimes which they affirmed him to have been guilty of, and earnestly desiring me to send for him thither, and to pass sentence upon him out of hand, as a capital offender.

16 But having seen fit to reject their proposal for bringing him back to Jerusalem, I told them, That as it is utterly unreasonable in itself, so it is directly contrary to the invariable and laudible customs and laws of the Romans, to adjudge any man to death, and (*καταστήσει eis ἀποθνήσκειν*) arbitrarily give him up to destruction, be he ever so culpable, merely upon depositions on one side of the question, without first bringing him and his accusers together, and allowing him the privilege of hearing what they have to say against him, and of replying to it, for clearing himself of the crimes, that they lay to his charge: And so I ordered them that were most able to make any thing out against him, to come down to Caesarea, and accuse him face to face, that he might have a fair trial. (*ver. 4, 5.*)

17 When therefore, in compliance with this motion, several of them came down hither to prosecute him according to law, I, being desirous to detain them no longer than might be necessary, and to dispatch the affair as soon as possible, called a court the very next day; and sitting on the bench, as judge of the cause which was to be brought before me, I sent commands to the proper officers to produce the prisoner, and set him at the bar.

18 And when his adversaries stood up to accuse him of the high crimes and misdemeanors alledged against him, they, to my great surprise, did not mention, much less prove, any such things, as I imagined they intended, against him; nor did they so much as attempt to shew that he had been guilty of any injuries, that properly fall under the cognizance of the civil magistrate, as by their hideous outcries against him I thought they would.

19 But, instead of doing any thing like this, they pressed him, with great heat and passion, about several points, that are controverted among themselves,

S. f. relating

gainst him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him, whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus commandment Paul was brought forth.

relating to their own religious, or, as I should call them, *superstitious* tenets, and particularly relating to one Jesus, who was crucified and died some years ago, but whom Paul boldly and peremptorily affirmed to have risen again from the dead, and to be now alive in heaven.

20 And because, after all that was said on both sides, I thought myself an incompetent judge of such sort of disputable questions, and was doubtful in my own mind, who was in the right, and whether an affair of this nature might not more properly belong to an ecclesiastical, than civil court of judicature; I therefore asked the prisoner, whether he would be willing to go to Jerusalem, and be tried there in my presence by the Jewish sanhedrim, who were better judges of these matters than I, and might give me further light into the merits of the cause, and so enable me to proceed upon proper evidence in doing him justice.

21 But when Paul, instead of complying with this proposal, refused to be turned over to that court, and appealed to the emperor, whose honour it is to be styled *Augustus*, that he might rather be detained for a hearing before his Majesty himself, than before them who had shewn so much inveteracy against him: I ordered him to be kept in safe custody, till I might have an opportunity of sending him to our sovereign Lord Nero at Rome; and, after such appeal, I could not well do otherwise.

22 Then king Agrippa, who, being a Jew, could not but have heard much of Jesus, (*chap. xxvi. 26.*) said to Festus, I should be very glad to see this prisoner, and hear, from his own mouth, what he has to say in vindication of himself, and of his doctrine, that I might be capable of forming some judgment about them. To which Festus replied, With all my heart, Sir; You shall, if you please, have an opportunity for it to-morrow, when I hope you will be so good as to favour me with your thoughts about him.

23 Accordingly, the very next day, king Agrippa, and his sister Bernice came, and placed themselves in the judgment-hall with great magnificence and splendor, being richly decked with glittering ornaments, and attended with a large and pompous retinue, which, after all, was but making a vain shew, with a huge imagination or fancy of grandeur, (*justa talia Curvavimus*) that has nothing in it, compared with the truly noble and inward adornings of knowledge, virtue, grace, and holiness, with which Paul appeared in his bonds and despicable garb: And, as the designed interview had taken wind, the chief officers of the

my, and the civil magistrates and principal citizens of *Cæsarea*, crowded thither, not from any desire of spiritual benefit, but to gratify their curiosity in seeing and hearing what might pass: When therefore (ver.) this grand assembly was gathered together, *Paul*, by *Festus* the governor's order, was brought before them, according to what Christ had foretold his servant *Ananias* concerning him. (*Chap. ix. 15.*)

24 And *Festus* had King *Agrippa*, and all men which are here present with us, we see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

24 And *Festus* opened the occasion of their coming together in the following speech to them, saying, O king *Agrippa*, and all of you gentlemen, that are here assembled with us*, Ye see this man, who stands before you as a prisoner; look at him, and carefully observe him, who has made so much noise amongst us, and concerning whom abundance of the Jews both at *Jerusalem* and at this city, have solicited me, with great importunity, (*strepitus* *meus*) to pass sentence upon him, as a capital offender, crying out with mighty vehemence against him, as a man of such pernicious principles and practices, and as such a busy promoter of them, that it is not fit for him to live any longer upon earth.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

25 But when, upon hearing both sides, I really could not find him to have been guilty of any fault, that can be deemed of a capital nature, or deserving of death; and when, upon asking him, for some special reasons, whether he would consent to go to *Jerusalem*, and to be judged there before me, he himself appealed to *Nero* our sovereign, (*ver. 9.—11.*) who, in honour of our two first emperors, *Julius Cæsar* and *Augustus*, is called both *Cæsar* (*ver. 11.*) and *Augustus*, I thought it necessary, and have accordingly resolved, to send him ere long to *Rome*.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord, therefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king *Agrippa*, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

26 And yet, after all, I am greatly at a loss to know what to write to his Majesty concerning him, as not being able to state his case with any exactness, by reason of the various and confused representations that have been made of it; nor to say, with any certainty, against what law of the government he has offended: I have therefore brought him before this honourable assembly, and particularly before yourself, O king *Agrippa*, who are well known to be very expert in the Jewish as well as Roman laws, (*chap. xxvi. 3.*) that, after further examination, with calm-

S I 2

ness

N O T E.

* As the verb *Stipari* is found in the indicative and imperative moods, I have given a view of both in the paraphrase. *Festus*, says Mr. Henry, "spoke to all the men (*varis* *viris*) in distinction from women, as if he intended a tacit selection upon *Bernice*, a woman, for

"appearing in a meeting of this nature; "He did not refer any thing to her judgment, or desire her counsel. But all "you that are present, that are men, (so the words are placed,) I desire you to "take cognizance of this matter."

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

ness and impartiality, I may be favoured with your advice, about what may be proper for me to write to to his imperial majesty concerning him.

27 For, in my apprehension, it would be a preposterous and absurd piece of conduct in me, and might justly be censured by the emperor himself, were I to send a person under custody, to be tried before his Majesty for his life, and not to give some account, at the same time, of what sort of crimes are laid to his charge.

RECOLLECTIONS.

So desperately wicked is the heart of man, in its enmity against Christ and the gospel, that neither length of time, nor repeated experience of its vain attempts, and shameful defeats, can wear it out, or subdue it. How restless were the unbelieving *Jews* in their endeavours to destroy the apostle *Paul*, for preaching a crucified and risen Jesus! They desired an unrighteous sentence to be passed upon him, as a favour to themselves, and even contrived to murder him, when they found that no legal process could reach his life. But how did God, in his providence, watch over him, for his preservation from their malicious designs! *Festus* refuses to send for him to *Jerusalem*, at their request, and would try him at *Cæsarea*, where his enemies could prove nothing against him; and when, notwithstanding this, the governor afterwards, in complaisance to them, would have put this excellent and innocent servant of Christ into their power, *Paul* himself, under divine direction, prevents it, by an appeal to *Cæsar*, which made way for his going to *Rome*, and preaching the gospel there, as the Lord Jesus had foretold he should. But how hard is the case of Christians, when they are forced to throw themselves into the hands of a prince, as barbarous and blood-thirsty as *Nero*, to escape the fury of false pretenders to religion! However, they, like the apostle, ought to defend their integrity against unjust accusations as well as they can: And when dangers are otherwise unavoidable, how justifiable and prudent is it in them to take such advantages, as the government they live under may afford for their protection! They may expect more equity, even from a heathen judge, like *Festus*, than from blind and envious zealots, like the rulers of the *Jews*.—As no man ought to be condemned for any crime, till he and his accusers are brought face to face, that he may answer for himself; so, how mean thoughts soever the magistrate may have of Christian religion, how evidently will it always be found, upon examination, to have no iniquity in it: Nothing contrary to the welfare, peace, and good order of civil society; much less to have any thing in it, for which its preachers, or professors, can deserve death. The more it is searched into, the more its doctrines, and its wise and faithful advocates will be cleared from reproach. But, O how happy would it be, if our rulers and great men were as ready to hear the gospel, that *their own souls may live*, as *Agrippa*, *Bernice*, the officers of the army, and the principal citizens of *Cæsarea* were, to gratify *their curiosity*, by hearing what the apostle *Paul* had to say in vindication of himself, and of the great articles of his faith and ministry!

C H A P. XXVI.

Paul, being permitted to speak for himself, gives an account before king Agrippa and others, that in the younger part of his life he was a Pharisee, and a furious zealot against Christianity, 1,—11. Relates his conversion and call to the apostleship, and his preaching afterwards, 12,—23. Festus upon hearing it, counts him mad, who maintains the contrary in a modest appeal to Agrippa, 24,—26. Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a Christian, and, together with Festus, pronounces Paul to be innocent, 27,—32.

TEXT.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself,

PARAPHRASE.

WHEN Festus had opened the design of his bringing the apostle Paul before king Agrippa, and the rest of the company, Agrippa called out to Paul, and said, You may now have free liberty, without danger of being unseasonably interrupted, to offer what you have to say in your own vindication from the crimes that have been laid to your charge. Thereupon Paul, reaching out his hand in a free and decent action, to intimate that he was going to speak, and desired the silent attention of the audience, made his apology (*απολογία*) for himself and his glorious cause, like a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian divine, in the following respectful, judicious, and moving manner:

1 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

2 Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

3 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first

2 I esteem it, O king Agrippa, a favourable turn of Providence, and it is a great satisfaction to me, that I am called, at this time, to plead my cause before a prince of your great capacity and advantages, for understanding the truth and force of every particular, that I shall alledge to clear myself, and the doctrines I preach, from the invidious indictments that have been preferred against me, by my countrymen, the Jews.

3 And this I shall attempt with the greatest pleasure, especially, because I am well assured of your Majesty's noted proficiency in the knowledge of all the religious rites, ceremonies, and customs of the Jews, and points of controversy among them, relating to their perpetual obligation, and to the coming of the Messiah. I therefore humbly and earnestly entreat, that, as the seriousness and importance of the subject require it, you would please to hear me with clemency, candour, and patience, whilst I give you a brief account of my principles and behaviour, all along from my youth up, to this very day.

4, 5 As to the manner of my life and conversation in younger years, though I was born of Jewish parents at Tarsus in Cilicia; yet I was early educated among

first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews,

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that, after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers;

among the people of mine own nation at Jerusalem, where I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, (chap. xxii. 3.) a Rabbi of great reputation for learning and religion. This is a fact generally known among the Jews themselves, many of which were acquainted with me from my very first coming thither, and all along afterwards, during my abode there; and were they so just and fair, as to appear to my character, they could not but bear me witness, that I was not only by *profession*, but in *practice* and behaviour, a *Pharisee*, living up, with the greatest sobriety and exactness, to the rules and orders of that sect, which is, of all others, the most strict and accurate in religious observances, especially of ceremonial rites, according to the law and the prophets, and the traditions of the elders: So that it is neither through ignorance, prepossession, or libertine principles, nor from any strong habits of vice, that I have altered my sentiments about some important points of a religious nature, whilst I still retain as great a regard as ever, to the fundamental articles of the religion which I was brought up in.

6 And even now I stand accused, and am judged, as a criminal, by mine adversaries, for professing and preaching, upon the surest grounds, that the great blessing, which was promised to *Abraham*, and others of our pious ancestors, and was the object of their faith and hope, is now confirmed, and, in part, fulfilled, by the coming of Jesus Christ *, whose resurrection

N O T E.

* It appears from ver. 8. that the apostle here speaks of the *resurrection*; and I think the connection of ver. 9. with that verse, plainly intimates, that he meant the resurrection of Christ; for otherwise, what he there says about the things which he once *thought he ought to do*, *contrary to the name of Jesus*, seems to be brought in too abruptly. It likewise appears from chap. xxiv. 15. that he included a resurrection of the righteous to eternal life, which was the object of his hope; and as the resurrection of Christ was a grand article, which ran through the apostle's ministry, we cannot but suppose, that he mentioned their resurrection, as the fruit and consequence of his. When therefore he represents the great benefit hoped for, as a matter of promise, he seems to intend, that it was either the upshot of all the promises, or of some eminent and comprehensive promise made to the fathers, such as that given to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, that God would be their God;

from whence our Lord inferred the resurrection of the dead; (*Matt. xxii. 31, 32.* see the note there) and, with respect to which, God is said to have *prepared them a city*, *Heb. xi. 16.*; or the promise to *Abraham*, that *in his seed all nations should be blessed*, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And this promise of the Messiah included his own resurrection, (*Psal. xvi. 10.*) and the resurrection of others to eternal life through him; for *they that be of faith could not otherwise be blessed with faithful Abraham*, and, as *Abraham's seed, be heirs according to the promise*, as the apostle says they are, *Gal. iii. 9, 29.* Accordingly Dr. *Whitby* observes from *Maimonides*, that it was one of the fundamental articles of the Jews, that *their Messiah should raise the dead, and bring them into paradise*: And as it was expressly foretold, *Dan. xii. 2.* that of *them that sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall awake to everlasting life*; so we are assured, (*Heb. xi. 35, 39.*) that some

rection from the dead proved him to be the only true and expected Messiah; (*chap. xiii. 32; 33.*) and that, as he is the first-fruits of them that sleep in him, (*1 Cor. xv. 20.*) they who believe in his name shall rise again to everlasting life. (*Chap. xxiv. 14, 15, 21.*)

Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

7 Unto the enjoyment of this promise of a blessed resurrection, religious people among the twelve tribes of *Israel* hope to arrive; in which hope they worship God with perpetual and intense fervour, (*11 Petrus*) and with great frequency, (*Luke xviii. 7.*) every morning and evening, and at all proper seasons; (*Luke ii. 37.*) and yet for the sake of this hope according to the promise, which I entertain, and endeavour to propagate for the good of others, I am so unhappy, O king *Agrippa*, as to be accused by the *Sadducean Jews*, as though I were therein guilty of the most heinous crime, and asserted the most monstrous absurdity.

4. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

8 But I would humbly ask this honourable assembly, Why should it be deemed unreasonable to believe, that the great God and Creator of all, whose power is infinite, should raise Jesus, his only begotten Son, from the dead, and raise up others to an immortal life through him *? What! Do any of you account this to be past all possibility, or belief, while none of the *Jews* themselves, except the *Sadducees*, deny a resurrection of the dead?

plurily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

9 I myself indeed, formerly, was as much prejudiced against the notion of a crucified and risen Saviour, as any one, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, now can be; inasmuch that (to my shame I speak it) I really thought it was my duty, and would be doing God good service, to use my utmost endeavours, by all means possible, for suppressing the reputation, authority and interest, name and doctrine of Christ, who was commonly called, by way of contempt, Jesus of *Nazareth*.

to Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief

10 And this I did in the most public manner at *Jerusalem* itself; yea, so zealous and active was I therein, that I got abundance of the holy disciples of the Lord Jesus to be committed to jails, and laid under close confinement, for the profession they made of faith in him, by virtue of warrants which I obtained of

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of the ancient worthies were tortured, which these words (*τὸ αἰσχροῦ*) may be rendered, according as they are read with a point between them, or not; and it is highly probable, that the apostle might observe an air of ridicule in some of the company, at his mentioning the promise.

* I have taken in both the ways in resurrection.

chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme: and, being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon, as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests;

13 At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.

of the chief priests and elders against them; (*chap. xxii. 5.*) and when any of them were tried, condemned, and executed for their religion, I cried out aloud for what I called justice, and gave my suffrage against them, (*μαρτυροῦντα ὑμῶν*) declared my approbation of the severest death that could be inflicted upon them, and justified it in all companies; a notorious instance of which appeared at the most cruel martyrdom of one *Stephen*, a man of great eminence among the Christians. (*Chap. vii. 58. and viii. 1.*)

11 I also very frequently searched out others of them, and brought them to every synagogue that lay convenient for me, where I took care to have them well scourged, and exposed to open shame; and, by the terrors of persecutions, with which I indefatigably pursued them, I, alas! forced some of them, against their consciences, to renounce and blaspheme Christ's blessed name, by which they were called; as though they thought him an impostor: And, not contented with this horrible violation of all natural and sacred rights nearer home, so furiously was I enraged against them, even unto madness itself, and so vexed at heart, to think that, notwithstanding all I could do, they rather gained, than lost ground, that I followed, and distressed them, by all possible methods of severity, even unto far distant cities, without the confines of *Judea*, where they dwelt, or were driven to seek shelter from the fury of my oppressions. From all these well-known dreadful facts, it plainly appears, that there could not be a more determined and inveterate enemy to Christianity than myself; and therefore my conversion from what I then was, to what, blessed be God, I now am, must in all reason be supposed to be owing to some extraordinary cause.

12 Now, to give you a faithful account of this, it was in the following miraculous manner: Whilst I was, at a certain time, going as far as the city of *Damascus* in *Syria*, to execute the cruel commission and powers, which I had received from the chief priests, and the rest of the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, to distress the disciples of Jesus there;

13 At noon-day, O king *Agrippa*, as I was travelling on the road thither, full of zeal and resolution to do my utmost against them, I was, all on a sudden, surprised with a most illustrious light, which darted down from heaven, with irresistible evidence of its being a divine appearance, and which shone all around me and my fellow-travellers, that went to aid and assist me in my persecuting errand; a light vastly superior to the brightest shining of the sun itself, and even obscuring its meridian splendor.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

14 And when all of us were so struck and astonished at this tremendous dazzling light, that we fell prostrate to the earth in the utmost confusion and horror, I heard an articulate voice from the divine glory, calling distinctly to me by name, and saying, with great majesty and earnestness, in the *Hebrew* language, which I perfectly understood, it being my mother-tongue, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* That is, as I afterwards understood it, Why are you so daring, foolish, and impious, as to lay yourself out with such indefatigable pains, to abuse and oppress my members and my cause, which I am so nearly interested in, and concerned for, that I account what is done against them, to be done against myself? You thereby persecute me in them: All this is as senseless and fruitless, and as injurious to yourself, as it would be for a man to kick with his naked foot against briars and thorns, or even against goads and spurs, (*προς κάρτεα*) whereby he would only hurt and wound himself, without suppressing or destroying them.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

15 I not knowing who it was, that in this earnest and awful manner spoke to me, and yet believing it to be one of the heavenly world, answered, with trembling and astonishment, Who art thou, Lord, that speakest with such terrible rebuke? What wilt thou have me to do? (*Chap. ix. 6.*) And he immediately replied, with a solemnity and endearment peculiar to himself, which pierced me to the heart, I am Jesus, the only Saviour, whom you are so desperately prejudiced against, as to persecute me, even unto death, in my members, that are intimately united and dear to me, whilst I myself, whom your own countrymen crucified, am out of your reach, and can be killed no more.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which

16 But, said he, with melting condescension and tenderness, to shame me out of my infidelity and cruelty, and to encourage my hopes in his mercy, Be no longer dismayed; but get up from your prostration on the ground, and stand on your legs again, as one ready to go about the better work that I shall employ you in: For I have now appeared in this miraculous and compassionate manner to you, for this very end and purpose*, as I shall soon more fully satisfy

NOTE

* By comparing chap. ix. 15. with chap. xxii. 14, 15. it appears that Christ communicated to the apostle the substance of what is here mentioned by *Apollos*, under a prophetic impulse at *Corinth*: But as it is not to be supposed

that every transaction is fully related in so short a history, and we often find, that in recording speeches some particulars are left out in one place, which are supplied in others, our Lord might say, at least, some of these things on the road,

I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that

tisfy you, that I may qualify you for, and authorize you to be, one of my ministring servants, to bear a plain, undaunted, and noble testimony to the truth, both of those important things concerning me, which ye have now seen and heard, and of still many more discoveries, which I will hereafter make by further appearances to you, till you shall be thoroughly acquainted with the whole scheme of my gospel, which you shall preach to others.

17 And though the dangers and troubles, that you may be exposed to, in fulfilling your ministry, will be great and many; (*chap. ix. 16.*) yet fear not, I will be with you, to take care of you; I will preserve your life, till I have done my work by you; rescuing you, by my watchful and powerful providence, out of the hands of the Jewish people *, who will be as inveterate against you, as you yourself have heretofore been against my disciples; and out of the hands of the most formidable enemies that you may meet with among the heathen nations, to both of which sorts of people I now (*αποσταλας*) give you an apostolic commission, to be executed in due season, for preaching the glad tidings of salvation.

18 To open the eyes of their understandings severally †, they both needing a divine illumination, which shall attend your ministry, to give them a true discerning of spiritual things, and to turn them by a thorough conversion, in the sense and temper of their hearts

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road, and further confirm them afterwards by *Ananias*, and still more fully explain them in the apostle's vision in the temple, at his second journey to *Jerusalem*; (see the note on *chap. ix. 17.*) or else for brevity's sake, the apostle's own historian might here relate these things, as instructions that he declared himself to have certainly received from Christ, without nicely distinguishing the different manner and time of his receiving them.

* The people, evidently mean the Jews, in distinction from the Gentiles, as they are also distinguished, *ver. 23.* Accordingly after the people, the Syriac version and some manuscripts read, of the Jews. Vid. *Bers.* and *Mill.* in loc.

† I do not see any necessity for confining the sense of this verse, as interpreters commonly do, to the conversion of the Gentiles: For how strongly soever it may be descriptive of them, it is plain to me, and I think is generally allowed, that our Lord's sending the apostle, which was spoken of in the foregoing

verse, related to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles. Why then should not this verse, which expresses the end for which Christ sent him, relate to one as well as the other of that sort of people? There seems to be nothing in these passages that may not be applied to the Jews, whose guilty, dark, and enslaved circumstances, and whose conversion are described in other parts of the New Testament, in terms near a-kin to these. See, among others, *Matth. iv. 16, 17. Luke i. 16, 17, 24.—77. John i. 5. and iii. 14.—21. and viii. 34.—45. Acts xv. 9. and Rom. ii. and iii.* And when the apostle comes to tell *Agrippa* in the two next verses, (*ver. 19, 20.*) how he complied with this order from Christ himself, he speaks of his preaching first to the Jews at *Damascus* and *Jerusalem*, and through all *Judea*, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, which has a plain reference to what Jesus here spoke of, as the end of his sending him.

that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

hearts and course of their lives, from the darkness of blind superstition and idolatry, ignorance and error, sin and folly, to the light of saving knowledge, and to all true holiness; and from the tyranny and domination of the prince of darkness, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, to an entire subjection and willing obedience to God, as their chief good and highest end, and to his service, and his way of salvation by a Redeemer; that they may readily accept of, and obtain the free and full remission of all their sins; and may be intitled to, fitted for, and at length made actual partakers of, that glorious inheritance of the children of God, (*κληρος*) which, by his sovereign disposal, is divided, as the land of *Canaan* was, by lot, among them that are renewed and made holy, as well as pardoned, through a lively and heart-purifying faith, which terminates upon me, as the only Saviour of lost sinners, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

19 Whereupon, O king *Agrippa*, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

19 This heavenly light, and its attending gracious instructions and orders, came with such irresistible evidence, authority, and power, to my mind and conscience, O king *Agrippa*, that I could no longer maintain my former prejudices against Christ and his gospel, or forbear yielding myself up willingly, and without reserve, to the divine call, that accompanied such a supernatural and over-bearing vision.

20 But shewed first unto them of *Damascus*, and at *Jerusalem*, and throughout all the coasts of *Judea*, and then to the *Gentiles*, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

20 But, in obedience to it, I immediately became a sincere convert to the Lord Jesus, and went and preached him, first of all to the *Jews* at *Damascus*, the very place, to which I was going with a contrary design; and, in due time to those at *Jerusalem*, where I had been educated, and was formerly known to be the vilest of persecutors; (*chap. ix. 20.—29.*) afterwards I likewise travelled to various towns and villages through all the country of *Judea*, that I might proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and shew my hearty good-will to my kinsmen after the flesh: And, at length, I turned to the *Gentiles*, (*chap. xiii. 46.*) declaring to all sorts of people, according to my instructions, (*ver. 17, 18.*) that it is their indispensable duty, and highest interest, upon the encouragements of the gospel, now, after all their former ignorance, errors, and evil ways, (*παρανομίαι*) to change their minds, to take conviction of their guilt and danger, and to embrace the truths of divine revelation, as I myself had done, through grace; and with grief for, and hatred of, all their iniquities, to turn from them to God, through a crucified and risen Saviour; (*ver. 23.*) and in consequence of this, as also in testimony of their sincerity therein, to abound in such good

works as are suitable to, and becoming believing penitents.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light

21 It was only for preaching these benevolent, holy, and heavenly doctrines, of the truth of which I was so remarkably convinced, and for the publishing of which I was so immediately authorized from heaven, that the unbelieving *Jews*, through their desperate enmity against Jesus Christ himself, and against his pure gospel, seized me in the temple at *Jerusalem*, and were going (*διακονισμα*) to put me to death, in a tumultuous manner, with their own hands. (*Chap. xxi. 30, 31.*)

22 Having therefore, according to my great Lord and Master's promise, (*ver. 17.*) found wonderful protection at that perilous juncture, through the super-intending care and good providence of God, by means of the chief captain's timely interposing for my safety; (*chap. xxi. 31, 32.*) and having by his extraordinary inward aids and assistances, and outward appearances on my behalf, been encouraged and supported under, and carried through many other dangers and difficulties, I am preserved alive, and (*ωρως*) have stood my ground to this very day, and still go on bearing my testimony for Christ on all occasions; which I do, without fear or shame, to lesser or greater sinners, poor and rich, to the populace, and to persons of high rank and dignity, like those of this honourable assembly, in hope that God will bless it to some of them: And, though the *Jews* are exasperated against me for this, I herein declare nothing, in effect, but that the divine predictions are now actually fulfilled in Jesus, which were delivered many ages ago by the holy prophets, and even by the types and figures, and prophetic hints *, contained in the law of *Moses* himself.

23 The predictions that I mean, and my countrymen are well acquainted with, are of the following purport; namely, that the promised Messiah, spoken of by the prophet *Daniel*, (*chap. ix. 26.*) should suffer many tribulations, and be cut off by death; not

N O T E.

* Since there is no express and literal testimony in the law to the death and resurrection of Christ; there is no doubt, says *Calvin*, on the place, but that this doctrine was delivered by tradition from the fathers, from whence the *Jews* learnt that all the figures referred to Christ. From this hint I would observe, that the slain sacrifice, and the scape goat, on the great day of atonement, *Lev. xvi. 5, &c.* and the living bird, which was dip't in the blood of the bird

that was killed, in the cleansing of lepers, *Lev. xiv. 6.* might be looked upon as types or figures of the death and resurrection of Christ: And the gathering of the people, (*עַם*) viz. of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the great *Shiloh*, was a plain prophecy of the calling of the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*; (*Gen. xlix. 10.*) and so it is understood by the *Chaldee paraphrast*, and the *Jerusalem targum*. See *Ainsworth* on those places.

light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

for himself, but for the transgressions of his people; (*Isa.* liii. 8.) and that he should be the *first* that would rise from the dead, never to die any more; (*Psal.* xvi. 10, 11. compared with *Acts* xiii. 35,—37.) and so would be the head, pattern, and author of the resurrection of others to eternal life, in which respect he would be the *first-born*, or *first-begotten from the dead*, and the *first-fruits of them that sleep in him*; (*Rev.* i. 5. *Col.* i. 18. and *1 Cor.* xv. 20.) and that he, by his word and Spirit, should bring the light of salvation to the people of *Israel*, and to sinners of the *Gentiles*. (*Isa.* xlii. 6, 7. and xlix. 6.)

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.

24 While the apostle was going on in this most delightful part of his apology for himself, and for these concerning truths, *Festus*, the *Roman* governor, who was an utter stranger to all such sort of doctrines, was surprised at them; and calling out aloud, to put a stop to him, said, with an air of contempt and disdain, as though his prisoner were to be pitied, rather than either believed, or blamed, or further heard, Alas! *Paul*, What strange unintelligible stuff is this, which you deliver with so much earnestness and warmth! You are certainly mad, to talk at such a wild rate as you do; I have heard indeed that you are a man of letters; (*chap.* xxii. 3.) and now I see how conversant you have been in the *Jewish* learning; (*ver.* 22, 23.) it seems to me, that your hard study, and multiplicity of confused, curious, and indigested ideas of things above your reach, have quite turned your brain.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

25 But *Paul*, instead of being ruffled and provoked at such scornful treatment, in the presence of so many persons of distinction, replied, with admirable meekness and composure, decency, and respect, No, most noble *Festus*, I am, blessed be God, far from being delirious or crackbrained; but the words that I speak, contain solid and important truths, founded upon the justest evidence, and real matters of fact; and what I say about them, does not proceed from a disturbed imagination, but from a sedate and rational mind, in full possession of itself, and under divine conduct, and is every way worthy to be entertained by the wisest and best of men.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was

26 For though your Excellency may be a stranger to these things, for want of proper opportunities of being let into them; yet the king, in whose royal presence I stand, and who has been long acquainted with the *Jewish* writings, and with the religious state of affairs in *Judea*, (*ver.* 3.) knows that the things I have been mentioning, are no whims or fancies of my own; and therefore I speak of them with the greater

was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

greater freedom and confidence before him: For I am well satisfied, that none of the facts which I have insisted on, such as the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and even my own conversion, are new things to him; he cannot but have often heard of them: For they were not secret transactions, nor have they been hushed up or concealed; but they were publicly performed, and have been divulged in numberless places, and attested by many faithful servants and disciples of the Lord Jesus, in proof and confirmation of this main point, that he is the true Messiah.

27 Then the apostle, turning to *Agrippa*, addressed him in a close and touching manner, saying, King, *Agrippa*, permit me, under favour, to appeal to your judgment and conscience, and humbly to propose this plain question, Do you, who have been brought up in the *Jewish* religion, believe the predictions recorded in the inspired writings of *Moses* and other prophets, relating to the Messiah? But pardon me that I put such a question, as though I suspected the contrary; I am persuaded from your known profession and character, that you do, and cannot but assent to them. I beseech you then to compare them impartially with what has been done and suffered by our Jesus; and see if they be not evidently and punctually fulfilled in him.

28 *Agrippa* was so sensibly impressed with this gentle, and yet serious and solemn appeal to him, that, in answer to *Paul*, he said, I am, I confess, so far from thinking you mad, that, on the contrary, there seems to be so much force of *scripture* and *reason*, and so much likelihood, at least, of truth, in what you have offered, that you have almost made a convert of me; and were it suitable to my dignity, and the religion I have been brought up in, I could scarce help resolving to renounce *Judaism*, and embrace *Christianity*.

29 Then *Paul* replied, with inimitable beauty, tenderness, and endearment, in which the *gentleman* and the *Christian* equally shone, I am so thoroughly convinced of the truth, necessity, and excellence of the doctrines I preach, concerning a crucified and risen Saviour; I have such happy experience of the present supports and unutterable joys that are to be found in him and in his ways, and am so fully assured of the eternal felicity that will be the final inheritance of all his true disciples; and my heart glows with such a compassionate, and, permit me to say, generous concern for the happiness of my fellow-creatures, who must be saved, or lost for ever, that it is my earnest

earnest desire and prayer to God, that, by his grace, not only your *Majesty*, but also his *Excellency* the governor, and every one of this august assembly may be, and O that they already were, not only almost, which will do them no good if it stops there, but (*ἢ πολλῶν*) abundantly, yea, entirely, and without reserve, in the same state and condition with myself, as a *Christian*; excepting the sufferings in bonds, which I now undergo, though chearfully, for the sake of Christ! May all of you be, what I am, in spiritual, holy, and heavenly dispositions and privileges, comforts and blessings; and none of you ever be subjected to the reproaches and tribulations, and this chain, which I, without any just cause, am loaded with!

30 And when he had said these moving things, and willingly would have proceeded further in his discourse, *Agrippa* (like *Felix*, chap. xxiv. 25.) growing uneasy in his conscience, got up on a sudden, as not caring to hear any more, lest it should come still closer to him than he would know how to bear; and, upon his motion to be gone, *Festus* the governor, and *Bernice* the king's sister, and all the assembly rose and dispersed.

31 And (*ἀναχωρησάντες*) as they were going away from the court, and afterwards while they retired, they talked one to another about both the matter and manner of *Paul's* defence of himself, and of the doctrine he preached; and, upon the whole, it carried such conviction along with it, that they agreed in saying, This wonderful man, notwithstanding all the clamour that has been raised against him, has certainly been guilty of no crime that deserves death, or so much as confinement or bonds.

32 And (2) particularly king *Agrippa*, who well understood both the *Roman* and *Jewish* laws, said to *Festus*, (who seemed to be of the same mind,) I really am of opinion, that this man might, and in justice ought to have been discharged, had he not appealed to *Nero* our emperor; there is no law of God, or of the government, to forbid it*; but now to *Cæsar* he must go †. And so this great and good man had a testimony

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* There was at present no law of the empire that could affect *Paul*: For *Constantine's* edict, chap. xviii. 2. which banished the *Jews* (and perhaps included the *Christians*) from *Rome*, died with *Constantine*; and *Nero* did not begin to persecute the *Christians*, till the tenth year of his reign, which was at least four, some say double that number of years, after his time; and therefore it was high

prudence in *Paul* to appeal to *Cæsar*, that he might be judged by the imperial laws, rather than be delivered up to the *Jews*, as in chap. xiv. 10, 11. See Dr. *Hammond* on the place.

† It is generally agreed that, by the *Roman* law, no judge of an inferior court could discharge, any more than condemn a prisoner, after an appeal to *Cæsar*, in case the prosecutors joined issue upon

testimony in the consciences of those, who were no friends to Christian religion, that he was innocent, and that there was nothing in his doctrine, for which any one ought to suffer, merely on account of his professing and preaching it.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Behold, in the great apostle, what a consistency and harmony there is between Christianity and good manners, and what an amiable lustre they cast, one on the other, especially when we are called to a defence of the gospel! And how great must our satisfaction be, if the worst crime our enemies can lay to our charge, is an avowed dependance on God's promises and performances, relating to the resurrection of Christ, and of believers to eternal life through him! Why should these things be thought impossible, or unlikely for the great and blessed God to do! And yet how many blind bigots, worse than the heathens themselves, are so incensed against the professors of Christ, as to think them deserving of imprisonment and death, only for holding articles of faith, as plain and important as these! And how vile must their temper be, when nothing gratifies them more, than forcing his professed disciples, contrary to their own consciences, to blaspheme his glorious name! But behold what a wonderful change the grace of God makes upon those that were under the power of the strongest prejudices to Christ before, and might be justly deemed persecutors of him, as all their enmity to his members and cause was for his sake! He can reach and turn their hearts, who were bringing the keenest destruction upon themselves by their impotent opposition to him; and having raised them up, as monuments of distinguishing mercy, can make them the most useful and eminent preachers of his gospel, and give them a noble, yet modest and decent courage, to maintain it before the greatest men upon earth: And how much soever their former acquaintance may be enraged against them for all this, Christ will take them under his care and protection, and will make their ministrations successful for turning sinners of all nations, degrees, and characters, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and for bringing them to that faith, repentance, and holiness here, which shall certainly issue in an eternal inheritance among the saints hereafter. The sum of the gospel, which corresponds to the predictions of *Moses* and the prophets, and by means of which believers are brought to all this happiness, lies in the doctrines of a crucified and risen Saviour, whose light and grace make them effectual to salvation: And though some, like *Festus*, may think the preaching of them to be talking like mad-men; yet they are, in reality, the words of the greatest truth and soberness; and it would be strange indeed, if any should deny this, that know and own the scriptures of the Old Testament, and the plainest facts of the New. But alas! How many are there that, like king *Agrippa*, assent to the doctrines of divine revelation, have some convictions of their excellence, and concern about sharing in their blessings; and yet never get any farther, than to be almost Christians! O happy for them, were they altogether so! Who, that has any compassion for mankind, would not wish, and beg of God, that, were it his will, all, who hear of Christ, might be thoroughly brought over to him, and partake of every thing that belongs to persons of the Christian character, except the persecutions which many of them endure for his sake? But even while they suffer these, they have enough in him to support them; and all disinterested persons must allow, that there is nothing in Christian religion, for which they ought to be deprived of their liberty, much less of their lives.

CHAP.

N O T E.

upon the appeal, and consented to it. But some are of opinion, that unless the prosecutors did so, the appeal was not absolutely binding; and that therefore *Agrippa* and *Festus*, being unwilling to disoblige the Jews, by setting Paul at liberty, made this serye for an excuse of their continuing him in custody, when they themselves knew that they might have justified the discharging him. See Mr. Henry on the place.

C H A P. XXVII.

Paul embarks and sets sail, as a prisoner, for Rome, which may be called his fourth apostolic journey, though under confinement, 1,—8. He foretells great dangers in the voyage, but the company do not believe him, 9,—11. They meet with a threatening storm, which reduces them to the utmost extremity, 12,—20. Paul, nevertheless, assures them from God, that none of their lives should be lost, 21,—26. They suffer a terrible shipwreck, but at length they all land with safety, though with great difficulty, on a certain island, 27,—44.

TEXT.

AND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next day we touched at Sidon.

PARAPHRASE.

FESTUS having resolved; in consequence of Paul's appeal to *Cæsar*, and of *Agrippa's* advice upon it, (*chap. xxvi. 32.*) that he should be sent to *Nero* at his imperial seat in *Italy*, it was ordered by Providence, for wise and holy purposes; and was concluded by *Festus*, for the convenience of the shortest and least expensive passage, that the apostle, and those of us who were his companions, and desirous to stick by him to the last, should go to *Rome* by sea: Accordingly they that had him in custody, during his confinement at *Cæsarea*, delivered up their charge, and committed *Paul*, together with other prisoners; who were likewise, for diverse causes, to appear at *Cæsar's* tribunal, to the care of one *Julius*; a *Roman* captain of an hundred soldiers, belonging to a body of troops, that went by the name of *Augustus's* legion.

2 And, embarking in a vessel, which came from *Adramyttium*, a sea-port of *Myſia* in the *Lesser Asia*, we thrust out, and set sail, designing to coast along the shore of the *Lesser Asia*, there being with us, in the ship*, another Christian friend and brother, namely, the memorable *Aristarchus* of *Thessalonica*, the metropolis of *Macedonia*, who was the apostle's companion in many of his travels and sufferings. (*Chap. xix. 29. and xx. 4.*)

3 The next day, after we went aboard, we arrived at *Sidon*, a noted city of *Phœnicia*, where, the ship

N O T E.

* The last we heard of the historian *Luke* and of *Aristarchus*, was when *Paul* went to *Jerusalem*, and was seized in the temple. (*Chap. xxi.*) That *Aristarchus* went with him thither, must be supposed, because he was one of the messengers of the church at *Thessalonica*, to accompany him in carrying their charitable contributions to the poor Christians there: *chap. xx. 4.* And that *Luke* travelled with him thither, ap-

pears from his speaking of himself as one of *Paul's* company, when he arrived at *Jerusalem*, *chap. xxi. 17.* (See the note on *chap. ix. 5.*) And as we now find both these persons with *Paul* at his going a ship-board, it is reasonable to conclude, that they either went with him, or soon followed him from *Jerusalem* to *Cæsarea*, and, probably, attended him all the time of his confinement there.

Sidon. And Julius courteously intreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone:

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called, The fair havens, nigh wherunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous,

ship making a short stay, God gave Paul such favour in the eyes of Julius the centurion, that he used him with great humanity, more like a friend than a prisoner, and had such confidence in his faithfulness and honour, as to allow him free liberty of going to visit some of his Christian brethren there, that he might have the pleasure of their company, and the benefit of their care, (*ἡμετέρους τυχάν*) in supplying him with good provisions for his present refreshment, and the remainder of his voyage.

4 And when we put off from thence, instead of sailing straight forward from east to west, and so leaving Cyprus on the right hand, we were obliged to coast round the northern side of that island, between that and the continent; because the winds lay so full in our teeth, that we could not steer a direct course.

5 But afterwards sailing along, near the Cilician and Pamphylian shores, over the sea, which takes its name from those countries of the Lesser Asia, we safely arrived at Myra, the metropolis of the province of Lycia, and the port to which the vessel was bound.

6 And there the Roman officer meeting with a ship, that came from the famous Alexandria in Egypt, and was bound for Italy, with a lading of wheat and other merchandize, (*ver. 18, 38.*) he, contracting with the master for our passage, ordered us to quit the other vessel, and go on board this.

7 Then (*δε*) putting to sea again, we for some time made but little way for want of a favourable gale; so that, after several days, we had scarce got forward fifty leagues, not quite so far as over-against Cnidus, a cape and city of the peninsula of Caria; and the wind being so much against us, that we could not keep on a direct course, as was intended, to leave Crete on the left hand, we were forced to sail under that island on the other side, over-against its eastern cape, which goes by the name of the promontory of Salmone.

8 And after we had, with great difficulty, got about that point, we soon reached a port, that lay a few leagues farther in that part of the island, and goes by the name of the Fair havens*, and is, indeed, according to its name, a beautiful port, for situation and prospect, not far from the city of Lasea.

9, 10 Now when a good deal of time had been wasted in proceeding only thus far, and sailing grew extremely dangerous, by means of the long and dark nights, and the tempestuous season of the year, that

N O T E.

* The fair havens still retains that name in the island of Crete, which is now called Candia, in the Mediterranean sea.

dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

were coming on; for autumn was by this time pretty far advanced, the annual fast of the Jews* on the great day of atonement, which was the tenth day of the seventh month, (*Lev. xxiii. 27, 28.*) being already past, Paul was strongly impressed with an apprehension of the bad consequence of venturing out to sea again, at such a perilous season: And therefore, though he all along trusted in the Lord to carry him safe to Rome, according to his promise; (*chap. xiii. 11.*) yet, that he might not neglect any means of preservation, nor presumptuously tempt God by unnecessarily exposing himself and others to apparent hazards, he earnestly entreated the chief persons among them to take heed what they did, saying to them, with a prophetic spirit, Gentlemen, I clearly foresee, that, if ye resolve to pursue this voyage at so incommodious and stormy a season, it will be attended with such injury, (*ὄζιμος*) as will turn to your own shame, and make you dearly repent your folly and rashness, and with abundance of loss by a terrible shipwreck, (*πολλὰς ζημίας*) not only of the cargo and vessel, but likewise, unless God wonderfully interpose to prevent it, (*ver. 23, 24.*) of our own lives, who are to sail in her.

11 Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

11 Nevertheless, the centurion, supposing that Paul, though an honest good man, understood little of sailing; and having a better opinion of the judgment of the commander of the vessel, and of its owner, in affairs of that nature, which peculiarly belonged to their province, who persuaded him that they might go with all safety, he gave credit to them, rather than to the admonition that Paul had given them.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, it by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west, and north-west.

12 And the Fair havens, though pleasant for situation, being a very inconvenient winter harbour, because it lay open to the north-eastern seas and storms, the majority of the ship's company agreed, while some of them were otherwise minded, that it would be best to set sail from thence, and try whether they might not make shift to reach, at least, as far as Phenice, and take up their winter station there, which is another port at the western end of Crete, and lay between two necks of land, one of which ran out toward the south-west, and the other toward the north-west points of the heavens; and so, being well defended against the most dangerous winds, ships might ride there with greater safety.

U 4 2

13 And

NOTE

* The fast, by way of eminence, (*ver. 31.*) seems plainly to mean the solemn fast on the great day of atonement; and partly to our October, it was about as that fell on the tenth day of the seventh month, or of the month Tisri, which answered partly to our September, and partly to our October, it was about Michaelmas.

13 And when the south-wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, looking thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island, which is called Claua, we had much work to come by the boat :

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and learning lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

13 And God, in his providence, suffering them to follow this counsel, that he might make his power known in carrying them through the greatest dangers, and might take an opportunity of honouring and distinguishing his servant *Paul*, by remarkable tokens of his favour; as soon as the south wind blew with a gentle gale, they flattering themselves that, by the help of this, they should gain their point, weighed anchor, and coasted along the shore of that island, as near as they could.

14 But to their great disappointment, the wind soon chopped about, and a terrible tempest, like a hurricane, (*αἰμός τυφάνος*) arose, and beat upon them, which is called *Euroclydon**, and may signify a wind that rises suddenly from the east, and puts the sea into a great commotion, or *Euro-Aquilo*, which signifies a north-east wind.

15 And when the vessel was whirled and tossed about, (*εὐλαγνίσθη*) and almost swallowed up in the surging waves, and we were not able to steer a regular course, or to face and make head against the impetuous storm, we were almost at our wits end, and, staggering about like drunken men, (*Psal. cvii. 27.*) even committed the ship to the mercy of the winds and waves, and let her drive at random, wherever they might force her, in hope that, possibly, God might, some way or other, appear for our preservation.

16 And while we were hurried along, and driven under the shore of a small island, called *Claua*, a few leagues distant from the south-western part of *Crete*, it was with the utmost difficulty that we hauled up the ship's boat, and became masters of it for such use as occasion might require in our greatest extremity.

17 The mariners having taken up, and secured the boat, set themselves, in the best manner they could, to strengthen and preserve the ship itself, by conveying large ropes under the bottom, and girding it all round about, as tight as possible, to hold its sides together, and prevent its splitting and shattering to pieces: And when they found that the ship worked toward the *African* shore, and were afraid lest she should strike upon the noted quicksands, which lay on that coast, they dropped their sails, and so let her drive just as Providence, which rules the winds and the waves, should carry her.

18 And

NOTE.

* Dr. *Mills* tell us, that the *Alexandrian*, *Vulgate*, and *Ethiopic*, for *Ευροκλύδων* read *Ευροκλύδων*, And as that signifies the north-east, which would drive the ship out to sea, *Crotius*, *Bo-*

chart, *Hammond*, and several other learned men, think that this is the wind here expressed by the *Latin* word turned into *Greek*.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship.

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, still hope that we should be saved, was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have looked from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

18 And we being still dismally tossed about by the furious winter-storms, (*κατακαταβροχθέντες*) now lifted up on the swelling waves toward the heavens, anon sunk down again to the depths, (*Παλ. cvii. 26.*) the mariners, on the morrow, cast some bulky parts of the cargo over-board to lighten the vessel, that it might be the better fitted to rise and fall with the foaming billows, and outlive the storm. So dear were their lives to them above all the treasures of this world!

19 And on the next day after that, the danger so sensibly increased, that all hands were aloft; and those of us that were only passengers, joined with the seamen to throw over-board, even as much of the utensils and furniture of the ship itself, as could be any way spared, or was apprehended to be useless to us in our forlorn condition.

20 And when the air grew so exceeding thick and dark, that we could neither see the body of the sun by day, nor the stars by night, for the space of several natural days together, consisting of four-and-twenty hours each; and when, at the same time, boisterous weather, which made the sea roar, and the waves swell, still continued to distress us, we were reduced to the very brink of despair, and had no manner of hope that, without a miracle, any of us could escape being cast away, and perishing in the mighty waters.

21 But after we had abstained, for a great while, from our ordinary and regular meals, some having no heart to eat, through the terror of their minds; and others of us being moved, by a religious fear of God, to humble ourselves with fasting before him, in hourly expectation of death; *Paul* stood up amongst us with great composure of spirit; and, though a prisoner, spoke with the authority and compassion of an apostle of Christ, first in a way of gentle rebuke, and then of seasonable consolation, saying, particularly to them that were so eager for prosecuting the voyage, (*ver. 11, 12.*) Sirs, It would have been your prudence and interest, as well as duty, to have complied with the solemn admonition which I gave you at the *Fair havens*, about the danger of venturing out from thence to sea at this stormy season; (*ver. 8, 9, 10.*) and ye ought not to have left that port in *Crete* to expose yourselves to all this mischief and damage, (*τὴν ὑμῶν ταῦτα καὶ τὴν ζημίαν*) which I suppose ye are now ashamed of, as seeing, to your cost, how ye have brought it upon your own heads; and how all your skill in navigation, and hopes of gaining time and profit, by pushing forwards, have been miserably confounded.

22 However,

21 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

22 However, I would not aggravate your sorrows, nor entertain the least resentment for the contempt which ye then put upon my advice. No, I rejoice, that, amidst all these terrors, I am able to speak a word of comfort to you; I therefore now beseech you to be of good heart, and not despair of safety by the mercy of God, notwithstanding all your former folly, and present danger: For I can certainly assure you, that not the life of any one of you all shall be lost; only the ship itself will be cast away. I speak not this from any private guess, or judgment of my own, but by special and undoubted intimation from the great God himself, whose kingdom rules over all.

23 For, this very night last past, that God, whose I am, in common with all others by creation and preservation, and, in a way of more peculiar property, by his special choice and redemption, by covenant-relation, and by his subduing my heart to himself, and my own consent to be his; whose apostle also I am, and whom, by his grace, I cheerfully make it the great business of my life to serve, in preaching his gospel, and in all manner of holy conversation and godliness: This my God, I say, sent his angel, a glorious inhabitant of the heavenly world, who appeared to me in a vision, as plainly as if he had been a man standing by me:

24 And he spoke to me by name, saying, *Paul*, notwithstanding all the threatening and formidable perils that now encompass you, Be not dismayed, as though the Lord Jesus had forsaken you, and would not arise to help and save you: For, as he told you, when in a former vision he himself appeared to you, (*chap. xxiii. 11.*) you must, and shall be safely conducted to the *Roman* emperor, to whom you are now going, that you may preach his gospel at *Rome*: And, instead of the ship's crew being in danger of losing their lives for your sake, as the mariners were of old for the sake of a former prophet, who was flying away from the presence of the Lord, (*Jon. i. 10,—12.*) observe what I now further-more tell you, God, in his great condescension and kindness, has for your sake, and according to the desire of your heart, given every one of them their lives that are sailing in the ship with you; so that none of them shall be lost.

25 I therefore beg, *Sirs*, that none of you would give way to discouragement: For I have an entire trust and confidence in God, according to his promise; and so great has been my experience of his power, goodness, and faithfulness to his word, that

I firmly believe the event will perfectly answer what this heavenly messenger has told me from him.

25 Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.

26 Nevertheless, I am, with equal certainty, assured, that we shall not be able to reach the port for which we are bound; but shall fall upon some island, the name of which is at present unknown, as not being revealed to me, where we must land, to escape the dangers of the sea.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:

27 Accordingly, after all this, and just a fortnight from the time that the terrible storm began, while, about the middle of the night, we were tossed up and down, and carried to and fro, by the violence of the tempest, in that part of the *Mediterranean* which is the *Adriatic* sea*, the mariners apprehended that they were making toward some land; and so might possibly get ashore, if they could but escape the danger of running a-ground.

28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

28 And, to assist their judgment about it, they let down the plummet to sound the depth of the water, and found it to be twenty fathoms, which, reckoning six feet to a fathom, is one hundred and twenty feet; and soon after, when they had made a little more way, they let down the sounding line and plummet again, and found that they came into shallower water; it being then but fifteen fathoms, or ninety feet deep.

29 Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the ship, and wished for the day.

29 Then being more fully satisfied that they drew near to a shore, and being afraid lest they should strike and split upon some rock or other, in their approach to it, they dropt four anchors out of the hinder part of the ship, and lay by, earnestly longing for break of day, that they might see what situation they were in.

30 And as the shipmen were about to see out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the ship,

30 In the mean while, the sailors, apprehensive of extreme danger, and not believing the assurances of preservation which the apostle had given them from God, (*ver. 22,—25.*) attempted to quit the vessel, and shift for themselves in the boat, which they had hoisted into the ship some time before; (*ver. 16, 17.*) and, in order hereunto, they had let it down again into the sea, under pretence of only going into it for the convenience of dropping anchors out of the fore part of the ship, that she might ride with the greater safety.

31 Paul said to the centurion, and the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship,

31 But *Paul* (probably by divine suggestion) seeing through their design, and its dangerous tendency, said to the centurion and his soldiers, Take heed that these mariners be not suffered to make their escape:

NOTE

* *Adria* is supposed not to be meant the gulf of *Venice*, which is now called the *Adriatic* sea; but of that part of the *Mediterranean* which lay between *Crete* and *Sicily*, together with the lower parts of *Italy*. See *Dr. Wells's geography of the New Testament*. Part II. p. 137.

the ship, ye cannot be saved.

escape: For God's peremptorily assuring me, (ver. 24.) that we shall all be preserved, supposes that it is to be done in the use of proper means, which are always inseparably connected with the end, in his purposes, promises, and performances; so that unless these men continue in the ship, to manage and work her for our common assistance, ye cannot obtain the promised safety, this being the way that God has appointed, and will own for bringing it about.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

32 Then the soldiers, as well as the centurion, were so convinced of the importance of this advice, that they immediately cut the ropes, by which the boat was fastened to the ship, and so let it fall into the sea, and run adrift out of their reach, to prevent the sailors leaving them at a time, when their help might be most of all needed.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

33, 34 And while we were waiting for day-light, Paul exhorted and encouraged the whole company to eat and refresh themselves, saying, It is now a full fortnight, (ver. 27.) since ye have been looking for death, rather than life; and all that time ye have been in such confusion and terror of mind, as to have lost all inclination to food, and have continued fasting, without having taken one regular and hearty meal*. I therefore earnestly entreat you to compose yourselves, and eat as much as may be proper for the refreshment of animal nature: For, considering your great fatigues, frights, and long abstinence, your health and safety (*santitas*) require it, since ye may otherwise soon sicken, languish, and faint to such a degree, as to be incapable of eating at all, or of struggling through the difficulties that lie before you: For I have such confidence in my God, that I can depend on his promise, which I mentioned to you before; (ver. 24.) and therefore I assure you again from him; that by his blessing, in the way of your duty, not the least harm shall befall any of you to the loss of life, or limb, which, to speak in a proverbial way, that is often used among the Hebrews (1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. xiv. 11. 1 Kings i. 52. and Luke xxi. 18.) shall be as entirely safe, as if not a hair of your heads were to fall to the ground.

35 And when he had thus spoken

35 And when he had spoke these encouraging things, he took bread into his hands, and, according

N O T E.

* But some learned writers take the literal construction and meaning of these words to be, "Expecting the fourteenth day, which is to day, ye continue without eating." So the meaning is, "that they had taken no food all that day; and implies, that out of expecta-

tion of the fourteenth day (which they looked upon as a critical time, when their danger would be at the highest) they had forgot to take their usual fast; not that they had fasted fourteen days." Blackwall's sacred classics, Vol. II. p. 171.

ken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

to his religious custom at set meals, gave thanks to God, with great solemnity, for their preservation through many dangers hitherto, for his promise of further safety, and for continuing to them their necessary provision; begging that it might be sanctified to their use, and they might receive it with grateful hearts, and have proper nourishment by it to strengthen them for the toils which lay immediately before them: And this he did in the sight and hearing of all the ship's crew, as not being afraid, or ashamed, to own God before heathens and soldiers, how little sense soever they might have of religion, or how much soever they might despise it: And, when he had broke the bread, he set them an example by beginning himself to eat of it.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they all took some meat.

36 Then they all, being revived and comforted, by hearing and seeing what he said and did, took food, and eat of it likewise, till they had enough, (*ver.* 38.) in hopes that it might be the means of supporting a life, which they were so firmly assured should be continued to them.

37 And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

37 And the whole company that were in the ship, including *Paul* and his friends, consisted of two hundred and seventy-six persons, who had immortal souls, that were to be mercifully preserved still in the body, and fared so well for the apostle's sake.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

38 And when they had satisfied themselves by eating as plentiful a meal as was agreeable and convenient after so long fasting, (*ver.* 33.) they still further, to disburden the vessel, that it might draw as little water as possible in working toward the shore, threw the wheat and other provisions into the sea, as hoping to have no further occasion for any more food till they should get to land.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek, with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

39 All this passed during the darkness of the night and the twilight of the morning; and when it grew broad day, they, to their great joy, discovered land, and found themselves to be very near it, though they did not know what country it was: But, looking about them, they observed a certain creek, which ran up into the shore; and, hoping that it might be a little harbour fit for their purpose, they were desirous, if it might be practicable, to push forwards, and carry the vessel into it.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves

40 And getting up the four anchors, which they had before cast out of the stern, (*ver.* 29.) they committed the vessel to the current of the wind and tide, to help her forwards as Providence should direct; and

themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the main-sail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that they which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship: and so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

at the same time they loosened the bands that fastened her rudders *, and hauled up the main-sail, which they had struck before; (ver. 17.) and so, having a favourable gale, made toward the land.

41 But (21) before they could quite reach it, they fell upon a shoal of sand, which was washed by two currents of water, one on each side; and by that means, they unavoidably, and unawares, ran the ship aground; and the fore part stuck so fast in the sands, that there was no bringing her off, or making her play as when she lay at anchor; and, (21) in consequence, the hinder part was soon dashed to pieces by the violence of the waves; and so the ship foundered, and was lost, as had been foretold by Paul. (ver. 22.)

42 In this extremity, the soldiers, that had the charge of the prisoners, were for killing them out of hand, and advised their commanding officer to it, lest any of them, that could swim, should get to shore, and make their escape, and they themselves should be called to an account for not securing them.

43 But as the centurion had a great value for Paul, whose behaviour had all along been unblameable and very engaging, and whose predictions about the loss of the ship, and their being cast on a certain island, (ver. 22, 26.) were already fulfilled, which encouraged his hopes, that what he had further said, about the preservation of their lives, should have its full accomplishment; he, for saving this excellent man, restrained the soldiers from executing their barbarous project, and commanded that such of them as could swim, should first of all leap into the sea, and make to land, that they might be ready to assist others, and to secure the prisoners as fast as they should arrive thither.

44 And the rest of the company, that were not able to swim, he ordered to shift, as well as they could, for themselves, some upon the planks that were on board, and others upon pieces of the ship-wreck; and, by these means, all that Paul had foretold, about the issue of this voyage, punctually came to pass; inasmuch that, by the wonderful providence

N O T E.

* Ships, it seems, in those times, had often two rudders, which were fastened by bands or chains, one on each side of the ship; when those bands were loosened, or lengthened out, the rudders sunk deeper unto the water, and by their weight preserved the ship from being over-set by the winds. These mariners seem to have bound the rudders as tight as they could, while they lay at anchor, lest they should be broke off by the violence of the storm; but now they loosened their bands, that they might the better use them in steering the vessel, and it might move the more readily and safely toward the shore. Vid. Pol. Synopf.

of God, the whole company escaped with their lives, through the utmost dangers, and got safe and sound to shore.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How like a stormy voyage is the passage of the people of God through this world! But how seasonably and remarkably doth he interpose by his providence, on their behalf, amidst their greatest trials and dangers! He often gives them such favour in the eyes of those, from whom they might have expected hard usage, that even they shall treat them courteously, and prevent the effects of rash counsels to kill them: He communes with their souls, and speaks words of comfort to them, when gloomy terrors are all around them: He sends admonitions of danger, and messages of peace by them; commands a blessing of preservation upon them, and upon others for their sakes, and over-rules the worst of tempests to their reputation and advantage; and he will ever shew, that nothing can hurt them, who are under his peculiar care and protection. How certainly doth the great God foreknow, and how easily can he inspire his servants to foretel events, that have no dependence on any stated, or necessary operation of second causes! And how infallibly are his absolute appointments and promises brought to pass, either by means that lie beyond the reach of human management, like the winds, and the waves of the sea, or that lie within its sphere, like the continuance of the mariners in the ship! But the means and ends are so closely and determinately connected in divine settlements, that the end cannot be accomplished, according to the purpose of God, without the use of the means which he has appointed for it, and which our faith in his promises obliges and encourages us to use, with the utmost care and diligence, as ever we expect a performance of them. What a pleasure is it to be able to think and speak of the blessed God, as the God, whose we are, and whom we serve! What confidence may we have in his word, and what comfort and courage amidst the most formidable prospects, when he says unto us, Fear not! But how ready are carnal men to trust to their own conceited wisdom, rather than to the revealed mind and will of God! And how great are the mischief and shame, which they hereby plunge themselves into! What thanks are due to God, and how solemnly should we pay them to him for our daily food, as well as for signal preservations and deliverances, and for hopes of further mercies! But, alas! of how low account are all the merchandize and treasures of this world, and how readily are they thrown over-board, when life itself would be endangered by keeping them! Yea, how tasteless is our necessary food, when all hope of life is taken away; and how worthless is it, when we shall have no more occasion for it! What a lively emblem is all this of the distresses of an awakened conscience, and of its contempt of all things here, and of life itself, in comparison with the salvation of the soul! And how willing should we be to abandon them, that we may outride the storms of divine wrath, and of all tribulations, and get safe to heaven at last, through the Redeemer's merit, and for his sake!

C H A P. XXVIII.

Paul and all the ship's company are hospitably entertained on landing at the island, which proved to be Melita, 1, 2. He is miraculously preserved from hurt by a viper that seized his hand, 3,—6. Heals Publius's father of a fever and bloody flux, and other persons of various diseases, 7,—10. Sails, after three months abode at Melita, to Syracuse, Rhegium, and Putcoli, from whence he sets out on foot for Rome, 11,—16. On his arrival thither, he is committed to the care of a single soldier in a private lodging, where, sending for some principal Jews, he shews them that there was no just cause for his imprisonment, 17,—20. He afterwards, at an appointed meeting, preaches the gospel to a great body of them, some of which believed, while others rejected it, 21,—29. And, continuing two years as a prisoner at large in his own hired house, he preaches, unmolested, to all that came to hear him, 30, 31.

TEXT.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

PARAPHRASE.

WHEN Paul, and all the company that sailed with him, had escaped the dangers of the sea, and were safely landed in an unknown country, which, as he had foretold, proved to be a certain island, (*chap. xxvii. 26, 39.*) they soon learnt by the inhabitants, that it was called * *Melita* or *Malta*.

2 And as we came ashore in destitute and deplorable circumstances; so the people of that place, though illiterate and unpolished in their manners and speech, were so far from going to plunder the wreck, as is too common in such cases, that they treated us with more than ordinary humanity and kindness: For God, whose good hand was always upon his servant Paul, and whose promise, (*chap. xxvii. 24, 25.*) never fails, filled their hearts with such pity towards us, that they immediately made a great fire, to dry and warm us; and took us into their houses, to shelter us against the inclemency of the season, because

NOTES.

* This is a small island, lying between Sicily and Africa, in the Mediterranean sea, and is now called *Malta*, but formerly *Melita*, as some suppose, from its abounding with honey, which in the Greek is called *Meli*.

† *Barbarous people* does not here signify persons cruel and savage in their temper; for the whole of their behaviour was just the contrary. But it means persons that were plain and unpolite in their manners and language, and were

generally unacquainted with the Greek tongue, and with the arts and sciences, and gentility of the more civilized nations. Hence *islanders* were generally counted *barbarians*, as having less opportunities than others, of improving themselves by conversation: The inhabitants of *Malta* are supposed by Dr. Lightfoot to be *Africans*, and by Bouchart to be *Phœnicians*; and some observe that the coast of *Africa*, which lies opposite to this island, is called *Barbary* to this day.

cause the weather was then very wet and cold, and we had been miserably drenched in the sea.

3 And the great apostle, from the wonted readiness of his own humble and benevolent mind, to engage in the meanest offices of service*, rather than from any injunction laid upon him, as a prisoner, was very active in gathering together an arm-full of wood; and when he had thrown it upon the fire, a viper, which was providentially hid in the bundle, feeling the heat, leapt out from it, and fastened itself upon one of his hands.

4 And when the illiterate islanders saw this wild, fierce, and venomous creature hanging upon his hand; as they had some natural notions of the great guilt of murder, and of the justice of Providence in revenging *that*, and such like enormous sins; and as, being ignorant of a future judgment, they imagined that the punishments of the wicked were only in this life, and that all remarkable calamities were special executions of wrath upon extraordinary transgressors; so they rashly concluded in their own minds, and said one to another, without waiting for the event, This man, who we see by his chain is a prisoner, has certainly committed no less a crime than murder; and therefore though he has narrowly escaped death by the storm at sea, which, in all likelihood, was raised for his sake, he is now overtaken by divine vengeance, which has sent this viper to dispatch him, in a more singular and exemplary manner, and will not permit such a wretch to live any longer upon earth.

5 He therefore, (*1 pet. i. 9*) to confute their false construction of this providence, which God designed for the manifestation of his own glory, and of Paul's innocency and acceptableness to him, shook the serpent off from his hand into the fire, with the utmost ease and composure of mind, and did not suffer the least injury by it†.

6 However, the *Barbarians*, knowing the malignant and poisonous quality of the viper, looked intently at him, and expected that, as was usual in like cases, his body would have swelled with an inflammation, or that he would have immediately fallen down dead: But when they had watched a considerable time, with an expectation of one or other of

N O T E S.

* The centurion's respect to Paul was so great, that we can scarce think he would put this piece of drudgery upon him, immediately after the fatigue of the shipwreck.

† God preserved the apostle, in a miraculous way, from the destructive rage

of this fierce and irritated animal, as he did *Daniel* from the mouths of the lions; (*Dan. vi. 21, 27.*) and our Lord hereby fulfilled his promise to his servants, that no power of serpents or scorpions should hurt them. (See the note on *Luke x. 19.*)

come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

of these dismal effects, and saw that, on the contrary, he remained sound and well, easy and chearful, and had received no manner of hurt, they altered their opinion of him; and, going into an opposite extreme, concluded that he was so far from being a criminal, as to be more than a mortal man; and were ready to idolize him as one of their gods appearing to them in human form.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

7 Now, (2d) near the place of the shipwreck, lay the seat and estate of the governor of the island, *Publius* by name, who, out of respect to such an extraordinary stranger as *Paul* appeared to be, (ver. 6) and out of respect to *Julius* the centurion, who had the custody of this prisoner, (chap. xxvii. 1.) received us all with great hospitality, civility, and kindness; and having a large heart, as well as a large purse, gave us good lodging and entertainment, at his own proper cost and charges, for three days running.

8 And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody-flux: to whom *Paul* entred in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

8 And, while we were there, it was so ordered in providence, that the governor's father lay dangerously sick of a fever, attended with a bloody-flux, which rendered his case the more threatening and hopeless, especially at his advanced years: And as *Paul* heard of it, and was always ready to requite kindnesses, and do good, he went to the old gentleman's bed-side, and praying with him for his recovery, and laying his hands upon him with expressions of his faith in the name of Christ *, according to his appointment and promise of success, (*Mark* xvi. 17, 18.) his faith and prayer was answered in the miraculous cure of the governor's dear parent, who was immediately restored to perfect health at once.

9 So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the island, came and were healed:

9 When therefore (3d) this miracle was wrought, and known in the neighbourhood, (or *δοξασαι*) the rest of the islanders, that were afflicted with various distempers, were so persuaded of the apostle's power to heal them, that they also came, or were brought to him, and received cures of their several maladies, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

10 Who also honoured us with many honours, and when we departed,

10 And, from that time forwards, our wants were liberally supplied, during our abode in the island: For the people were so affected with the important benefits which they received by the hands of *Paul*, that

N O T E.

* As Christ's commission for healing diseases ran in his name, and mentioning that was the apostle's usual way of working miracles, there is no room to doubt, but that he solemnly took notice of it in this and the following cures among these *barbarians*; to whom he very probably

preached the gospel, and that with good success; and this might be one great reason of their honouring him, and his company, with such honours as are spoken of ver. 10. and even as were customary among the churches of Christ themselves.

ed, they sailed us
with such things as
were necessary.

that they thought they could never shew too much respect to him, and to us, his companions, for his sake: And when we were about to take our leave of them, and set out for *Rome*, they generously heaped their favours upon us, furnishing us with every thing that we might have occasion for, to the end of our voyage.

11 And after
three months we
departed in a ship of
Alexandria, which
had wintered in the
isle, whose sign was
Caster and *Pollux*.

11 And after we had been detained a quarter of a year at *Malta*, till the weather grew more temperate, we embarked, and set sail again for *Italy*, in another ship, which, like the former, (*chap. xxvii. 6.*) came from *Alexandria*, and had lain in harbour at this island, during the winter season, and which, bearing the images of *Caster* and *Pollux*, took its name from them.

12 And landing
at *Syracuse*, we
tarried there three
days.

12 And having a prosperous voyage, by the will of God, we arrived at *Syracuse*, the metropolis, and a fine haven, on the eastern coast of the island of *Sicily* †, where we went ashore and continued three days.

13 And from
thence we set a
compass, and came
to *Rhegium*: and
after one day the
south wind blew,
and we came the
next day to *Puteoli*:

13 Then, setting out from thence, we steered a rounding course, as the wind would let us, till we arrived at the first sea-port in *Italy*, which lies directly over-against *Messina* in *Sicily*, and is called *Rhegium* †; and after one day's lying at anchor in that harbour, the wind turned to the south; and we, coasting with a favourable gale along the *Italian* shore, arrived on the morrow at *Puteoli*, a famous mart town, not far from *Neapolis* or *Naples*.

14 Where we
found brethren,
and were desired to
tarry with them se-
ven days: and so
we went toward
Rome.

14 There, to our great comfort, we met with several Christian brethren, who received us very affectionately, and entreated us to stay a week with them, that they might have the benefit of *Paul's* preaching and conversation, and that we might enjoy one Lord's day together, which the centurion, in his great civility, consented to: And, after that, we set forward by land for *Rome*, this being the farthest port that the ship was bound to.

15 And from
thence, when the
brethren

15 And when we left *Puteoli*, as our dear brethren at *Rome* had some intelligence of our being on the

NOTES.

* These images of *Caster* and *Pollux* were carved, or painted, in the form of two young men, mounted on two stately white horses, each of them holding a javelin in his hand, and were reputed, by the idolatrous Gentiles, to be the twin-sons of *Jupiter* and *Leda*, and to be propitious to mariners: so that they expected the protection from these fictitious deities, which entirely depends on the good providence of the only true God,

who made the heavens, earth, and sea, and whose kingdom rules over all.

† As this vessel seems to have been on a trading voyage, they probably staid three days at this place, either to unlade, or take in some goods.

‡ *Rhegium* signifies a breach, and was so named by the *Greeks*, because they imagined that, in some former age, an inundation, or earthquake at this place, had broke of *Sicily* from the continent.

brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the Three taverns; whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

the road thither, they rejoiced at the thought of seeing the face of the great apostle of the *Gentiles*, who had never been there before; but from whom they had received a most excellent and affectionate epistle, in which he expressed a longing desire to see them, and preach the gospel at that city; (*Rom. i. 10, 15.*) and so far were they from being ashamed of his bonds, that though he was coming to them as a prisoner, they were exceeding desirous to pay their respects to him, in the most public and honourable manner; and therefore many of them came to meet us; some about fifty miles from *Rome*, as far as the town called *Appii-forum*, in the famous *Appian* way; and others about thirty miles, to another place in the same high-road, called the *Three taverns*, or inns for public entertainment: And when *Paul* saw them, he was not only thankful to them for their brotherly kindness, but blessed God, who had put it into their hearts to shew their love, with so much zeal, tenderness, and respect; and he encouraged himself in the Lord his God, who had sent him such cordial friends, with whom he might freely converse, and advise in any emergency, and who, he might reasonably hope, would own and assist him in all his difficulties and dangers. This gave him fresh spirits, and made him go forward with as much courage, as if he were to have entered the metropolis of the empire with all the triumphs of a conqueror, instead of the disgrace of a prisoner.

16 And when we came to *Rome*, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but *Paul* was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

16 And when we arrived at *Rome*, the centurion discharged his trust, by delivering all the prisoners up to the chief commanding officer of the imperial guards, or *Prætorian* band there, to take the custody of them: But as God gave *Joseph* favour in the sight of his keeper, (*Gen. xxxix. 21.*) and brought *Daniel* into tender love with the prince of the eunuchs; (*Dan. i. 9.*) so, partly through the centurion's recommendations, and partly through *Festus*'s letters, who could not but own that *Paul* had committed nothing worthy of death, (*chap. xxv. 25, 26.*) the Lord gave this great apostle favour in the eyes of the captain, who, instead of putting him into the common jail, with the rest of the prisoners, permitted him to hire a private lodging, (*ver. 30.*) and to dwell there alone, as a prisoner at large, with only one soldier, who was linked to him by a chain, to guard him. (See the note on *chap. xii. 6.*)

17 And it came to pass, that, after three days, *Paul* called the chief of the

17 Now after *Paul* had been at this great city three days, he sent to the leading men of the *Jews* that resided there, desiring that, as he could not have liberty of going publicly to them, they would be

the Jews together. And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

good as to come to his lodging, and let him have the pleasure of speaking with them there: And when, in compliance with his request, they gave him a meeting, he addressed them in a free and engaging manner, saying, Ye men of *Israel*, and my kinsmen after the flesh, and brethren in the profession of the God of our fathers, The reason of my asking the favour of your company is, that I may have an opportunity of rectifying any misrepresentations that mine enemies may have made of me; and that according to my constant custom, wherever there are *Jews*, I may communicate the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ, as soon as possible, first of all to them, for whose persons and eternal happiness I am most heartily concerned: Whatever may have been suggested against me, I really have been guilty of no crime, in any thing that I have said or done, either against the rites and privileges of my own countrymen, or against the divine laws and ordinances, that were delivered by *Moses* to our fathers, and religiously observed by them; and yet I have been so unhappy as, through groundless insinuations, to fall under the displeasure of many of my *Jewish* brethren, to such a degree, as issued in my being made a prisoner at *Jerusalem*, and sent from thence to *Cæsarea*, to be kept in custody, under the power of *Roman* governors *. (Chap. xxiii. 10.—35.)

13 Who when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

18 Who, when in a fair trial they had heard all that could be urged against me, and what I had to say in my own defence, and had made the best enquiry they could into the true state of my case, would willingly have discharged me; because it plainly appeared to them, that I had done nothing to deserve death, or so much as imprisonment or bonds, as *Lyfias*, the chief captain, testified at *Jerusalem*, (chap. xxiii. 29.) and as *Felix's* behaviour shewed he believed in his own conscience, (chap. xxiv. 22, &c.) and as *Festus* and king *Agrippa*, and many other principal men declared afterwards at *Cæsarea*. (Chap. xxv. 23. compared with xxvi. 31, 32.)

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to

19 But when the *Jews*, from their causeless prejudices, which have been industriously fomented against me, objected to my being released, and would have had me carried back to *Jerusalem*, for another trial there, I had too much reason to suspect that this motion

N O T E.

* It is with admirable prudence and tenderness, that the apostle passes over the outrages of the *Jews*, and their horrid conspiracies against his life, which the foregoing history acquaints us with,

that he might not seem to charge them too severely, nor might exasperate these their brethren against him, for bearing too hard upon their countrymen and friends.

to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came, shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

motion was made with an ill design in some against me; (*chap. xxv. 3, 9, 10, 11.*) and therefore I found it necessary, for my own preservation, to appeal to *Cæsar's* immediate tribunal; not that I had any intention of accusing my countrymen, or of doing them the least injury, at his bar, but only of making my own defence before him in a legal way, since I could not be discharged without it.

20 I have therefore taken the liberty of calling you together, that I might have the favour of seeing you, and of assuring you, in a personal conversation, that the only fault, which the worst of mine enemies could justly pretend to charge me with, was my believing, professing, and preaching, what has all along been the object of the hope of every true *Israelite*, and indeed, for the substance of it, is the general expectation of our nation, according to ancient prophecies, at this very day; I mean, that the true *Messiah* has actually come, and died, and rose again, and that, through him, there shall be a resurrection to eternal life of all that believe in him. It is, I say, merely for my attachment to, and publishing these doctrines, that I am a prisoner in bonds, as ye see me to be by this chain, which fastens me to the soldier that has me in custody. (See the note on *chap. xii. 6.*)

21 The *Jews*, in reply, said to him, As to what relates to your own particular practice and behaviour, we have neither received any letters from *Jerusalem* or *Judea* about you; nor have any of our *Jewish* brethren, that, on one occasion or other, have come from thence, given us any information, by word or mouth, concerning you, or ever charged you with any crime*. So we can say nothing to that; nor do we design to trouble ourselves about it.

22 But as you profess Christianity, (*αἰσχυροῦς*) we think it equitable, and becoming us, and should be glad to hear your sentiments about it, and particularly about what you have suggested (*ver. 20.*) of the fulfilment of those things in *Jesus Christ*, which now are, and for many ages have been, the object of *Israel's* faith and hope: For this opinion of yours has so little appearance of truth, that, as is well known, the sect

N O T E.

* It is highly probable that *Paul*, having appealed to *Cæsar*, the *Jews* durst not follow him to that court, lest they should render themselves obnoxious to *Nero*, the then reigning emperor, who already had no great favour for them, though as yet he suffered them to live at

Rome. (See the first note on *chap. xxv. 32.*) And therefore they of *Judea* had sent no informations, and those of *Rome* would not venture to appear in a judicial process against him; and so *Paul* gained his end of getting out of their hands by his appeal. (*Chap. xxv. 31.*)

which of late years has pretended to assert it, is generally at this city, and in all places that we can hear of, cried out against, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as heretical and pernicious, serving only to throw divisions and confusion among mankind.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

23 And when on a day, which they had fixed with the apostle, a great number of the *Jews* came to him at his own lodging, he there explained to them the doctrine of the gospel, relating to the kingdom of grace, which shall be completed in the kingdom of glory: He shewed that this kingdom is not of a temporal and earthly, but of a spiritual, holy, and heavenly nature; and that the way of admission to its privileges and blessings is not by the works of the law, but alone through faith in Christ; and he plainly asserted, and gave evident proof, that God had *bore witness to it by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will*, (Heb. ii. 4.) and by the supernatural power, that had changed the hearts and lives of multitudes, and his own among the rest: And he further reasoned with them, to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah, and to induce them to believe in him as such, by giving them an account of the manner and design of his life, death, and resurrection, and by comparing those important facts with what had been foretold of him in the types and figures, promises and prophecies recorded by *Moses*, and in the writings of the succeeding prophets of the church of *Israel*: The apostle's heart was so enlarged, and so thoroughly engaged in this work, that he took indefatigable pains with the company, in clearing up, and recommending these, and such like grand points of the gospel, for a whole day together, continuing his discourse from morning to night.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

24 And so different were the effects of this excellent sermon upon his hearers, that some, through the attending power of divine grace, received the truth by faith, and in the love of it, which the apostle preached concerning Christ; whilst others of them, being left to the corruption of their own hearts, rejected it through unbelief.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Elisha the prophet, unto our fathers,

25 And when there was such a disagreement in their sentiments and tempers, as began to throw them into heats and quarrels among themselves, the assembly broke up; only just before they parted, the apostle, directing his speech to the unbelievers, left with them an awful passage, for their serious consideration, saying, It was with great truth and propriety, and with unerring foresight of these days, that the Holy Spirit, that divine person by whom

the sacred penmen were inspired of old, spoke by the prophet *Isaiab*, (chap. vi. 9, 10.) to our disobedient ancestors, for their reproof, and for a warning to their posterity, who ought to dread the thought of its being fulfilled in them,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

26 Saying, Go, deliver my message to this people, and tell them from me, Ye shall certainly hear, with the hearing of the ear, again and again, and shall not be favoured with a spiritual inward illumination, to give you a right understanding of the truths delivered to you; and ye shall surely see abundance of external evidence of their divine authority, and shall be so left of God to yourselves, in his righteous judgment, as not to be convinced of their reality and importance, nor discern their inmost native glory.

27 For, through the pride and prejudices, lusts and passions, which this people are under the power of, and willingly yield themselves up unto, their minds and hearts are perverted, blinded, and hardened; and their ears are inattentive to my word; and they have obstinately winked hard with their eyes, to shut them against the light that shines around them, lest they should be brought, by the opening of their understandings, to see such things as they are averse to, and do not care to know, and should be forced to comply with what they hear, but are resolved to reject; and lest such striking over-powering light should shine into their hearts, as they cannot tell how to resist, or get rid of, and they should be turned from their beloved sins and errors to myself, and I, by my renewing and sanctifying grace, should cure those desperate diseases of their souls, which they, insensible of their danger, take pleasure in. (See the note on *John* xii. 40.)

28 Since therefore ye have thus put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, (see the note on *chap.* xiii. 46.) I must now plainly tell you, that the blessed doctrine of salvation, through the great Redeemer, is not to be preached with a confinement to the *Jews*; but, by the sovereign, gracious, wise, and holy appointment of God, is sent to *Gentile* sinners; and great multitudes of them will be so powerfully wrought upon by it, that they will listen to it, and heartily embrace it, and be admitted to all its glorious privileges and blessings, from which ye perversely exclude yourselves.

29 And when the apostle had delivered this solemn and awakening admonition, the *Jews* went away, and had warm debates among themselves about this, and the other points that he had been insisting on; some, whose hearts were touched by divine grace, con-

tending

tending, that this was a wise and gracious, just and righteous dispensation; and others, who were left to their own obstinacy and unbelief, disputing against it, as an open violation of their ancient rights and privileges.

30 In the mean while, *Paul* continued a prisoner at large in his own house, which he rented, and in which he dwelt for the space of two full years*; during which confinement, he did not lead an idle life, but readily received all manner of persons, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that would come to hear him; and took unwearied pains in promoting the interest of *Christ*, and the good of immortal souls. (See the paraphrase on *ver. 20.*)

31 With these noble views, he set forth the nature and excellency of the gospel-dispensation, and of all the blessings of grace and glory, and particularly explained, and confirmed at large, those important truths, that relate to the person and offices, birth, life and death, resurrection and exaltation of *Jesus*, who is both *Lord* and *Christ*, and that relate to the way of salvation, through faith in him: And this he did (*μετὰ παντος παρρησιας*) with all boldness and liberty of spirit, and in as public a manner as circumstances admitted, to the furtherance of the gospel, and the conversion of many, among whom were some of *Cæsar's* household. (*Phil. i. 12, 13. and iv. 22.*) And divine providence so over-ruled the minds of his adversaries, that he went on quietly in his work, without any molestation from the civil magistrate, from the soldier that was his keeper, or from his own countrymen: (see the note on *ver. 22.*) So that though the apostle was in bonds, the word of the *Lord* was not bound; but had free course; ran, and was glorified.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a memorable instance of humanity and compassion have we in a heathen and uncultivated people, who shewed great kindness to a shipwrecked company, took them into their houses, made fires to warm and dry them, and generously lodged and provided for them? And how richly was it worth their while to entertain these distressed strangers, among whom, unawares to themselves, was one of the best of men, who, in return for their hospitality, laid his hands on their governor's

N O T E.

* *Paul* had been two years a prisoner under *Felix* at *Cæsarea*, chap. xxiv. 27. and, as is generally allowed, was kept in bonds, at least another year, under *Festus*, and in his tedious voyage, because he arrived at *Rome*; so that the whole of this imprisonment was five years. But as Providence now gave him greater liberty, and better opportunities, for ser-

vice, than in the former part of his confinement; so it is commonly concluded, and appears from *Eph. iii. 1. Col. iv. 18. Philem. ver. 9, 10. and Philip. i. 7, 13, 16.* that he wrote all those epistles during this his first imprisonment at *Rome*; and it is supposed that he wrote them in order of time, as I have here placed them.

vernors father, and on many others of their sick, and miraculously healed them, through the power of the Lord Jesus ! But how cautious should we be of forming our judgment of persons, merely by outward dispensations of Providence ! Though, from natural notions of God's justice in governing the world, the people of *Malta* rightly supposed, that divine vengeance often pursues murderers, and other notorious sinners, in this life ; yet they rashly concluded that *Paul* was such an one, only because a viper seized his hand : But when, contrary to their expectation, it fell off, and he received no hurt, what a surprising turn was there in their minds concerning him ! They then were ready to adore him as a deity ; and upon further acquaintance with him, and experience of what a blessing they had in him, they thought they could never do enough to testify their gratitude to him, and to his companions for his sake. How remarkably did God still further appear for him, in the midst of all his troubles and dangers ! *Malta* is left with honour and advantage ; the rest of the voyage is made prosperous by the will of God, and not by any influence of those vain idols, by whose names the ship was called : Upon the apostle's landing in *Italy*, he is comforted and encouraged by the affectionate and honourable regards of his Christian brethren, who came from *Rome* to meet him, and to own and accompany him, though a prisoner, to the grand metropolis ; and upon his arrival there, God gave him such favour with the captain of the guard, that he permitted him to live privately in his own hired house, under the custody of only one soldier ! And while he was thus two years a prisoner at large, what happy improvements did he make of such liberty as was allowed him ! With what admirable prudence did he early send for the chief of the *Jews*, and labour to take off their prejudices against his person and ministry, that he might be the better heard in what he had to say for Christ, for whom he was then an ambassador in bonds ! And, when he obtained an opportunity for it, with what perspicuity and enlargement, holy fervour and freedom of spirit, did he explain, confirm, and apply the glorious things of Christ's kingdom, as founded upon his death and resurrection, according to ancient prophecies ! But with what different events ! Some rejected them through unbelief, and others received them with a cordial faith ; and so there were divisions among them concerning Christ and his gospel, which ran so high on the part of the infidel *Jews*, as to render *Isaiah's* awful prophecy applicable to them, as a people given up, by the righteous judgment of God, to judicial blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, according to their own criminal choice. But while some put God's salvation far from themselves, he will send it to others, as, blessed be his name, he has to the *Gentile* world ; and will make it effectual to multitudes of them : And how much soever others may object against the sovereignty and righteousness of God in these dispensations, what an encouragement is it to the ministers of Christ to preach his gospel, wherever they have opportunity, to all sorts of sinners, when God assures them that some will receive it ! And what a mercy is it, when he enables them to preach it with holy liberty and boldness, and suffers none of their enemies to stop their mouths !

A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
APOSTLE PAUL'S EPISTLE
TO THE
ROMANS,
IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE apostle *Paul* wrote this epistle while he was at *Corinth*, as appears from his sending it by *Phæbe*, a servant of the church at *Cenchrea*, (chap. xvi. 1.) which was a sea-port belonging to *Corinth*; and is still further evident from the *salutations* he sent from *Gaius* his host, and *Erastus* the chamberlain of the city, (chap. xvi. 23.) both which were inhabitants of *Corinth*. (1 Cor. i. 14. and 2 Tim. iv. 20.) And it is generally supposed to have been wrote about the year of our Lord 57, when the apostle was preparing to go by *Troas* to *Jerusalem*; an account of which journey we have in *Acts* xx. 2, 3, &c.

Though this is placed *first* in the collection of the epistles, it was wrote after several others, as particularly after the *first* and *second* to the church at *Corinth*, and those to the *Thessalonians*, and *Galatians*; as also after the *first* to *Timothy*, and that to *Titus*. But as the apostle *Paul*'s epistles to the churches are placed *together* in the New Testament, so *this* is with good propriety set the *first* of them all, because it was written to the Christians that dwelt in the famous metropolis of the *Roman* empire; but principally, because it is one of the *largest* of his epistles, and gives us the most *comprehensive* view of the important doctrines and duties of Christianity: For, in writing to other churches, which he had planted, or to which he had preached and fully opened the gospel-scheme, he insists more sparingly on the evangelical principles in which he had before instructed them. But as he who was the great apostle of the *Gentiles*, wrote this letter to a church, chiefly consisting of *Gentile converts*, though not without a mixture of native *Jews*; and as this was a church, to which he had not, as yet, had an opportunity of personally ministering, as is intimated chap. i. 10, 11. and xv. 22, &c. so he, with admirable wisdom, and deep concern for their instruction,

instruction, edification, and establishment, enlarged the more copiously and particularly on the most important and distinguishing articles of the gospel-revelation; beginning, according to his usual method, with its *doctrines*; and then concluding with exhortations to *Christian duties*, that were suited to their circumstances, and to their privileges and obligations. And so this letter may be considered as a specimen of the great subjects of his *personal ministrations* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, when he was preaching the gospel to them.

In the *doctrinal* part of this epistle, the principal point he manifestly had in view, was to lay out the way of a sinner's acceptance with God, or justification in his sight, merely by grace, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, as common to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, without distinction of nations; and to vindicate it from various objections that were raised against it by judaizing Christians, who were for making up terms of acceptance with God, by a mixture of law and gospel; and were for excluding the *uncircumcised Gentiles* from any share of the blessings of salvation, brought in by the Messiah.

To clear up, confirm, and recommend this grand design, he begins, after his introduction, which is in the first fifteen verses, with asserting the doctrine itself. For the proof of it, he shews at large, that the *Gentiles* could not be justified by the *law of nature*, nor the *Jews* by the *law of Moses*; because every individual person of both sorts, was a transgressor of one or other of those laws; and that therefore justification must be alone through faith in Jesus Christ: And this he further illustrates by the example of *Abraham*, who lived before the *Mosaic law* was given, and was justified while he was uncircumcised, *chap. i. 16.* to the end of *chap. iv.* He then carries the argument back as far as the fall of *Adam*, which involved all mankind in sin and misery; and, in the vast fulness of his thoughts, he launches out into an account of the excellent benefits that are brought in by Christ, as the *second Adam*, and public head of all his spiritual seed, in opposition to the sin and death, condemnation and ruin, that were brought upon the whole world by the fall of the *first Adam*, the common head and parent of all mankind, *chap. v.* From thence he proceeds to represent the obligations that believers are nevertheless under, yea, and on this very account, to die unto sin, and live to God; together with their happy deliverance from the dominion of sin, from the condemning sentence of the law, and from all the dreadful consequences of being under them, even unto a triumphant victory over all tribulation and death itself, and an advancement to eternal glory, *chap. vi. vii. and viii.* Then he leads us to the *original* of the whole of this dispensation, in the eternal, free purpose of God; and shews that his rejecting the *Jews* for their unbelief, and calling the *Gentiles* to a participation of the blessings of the gospel, were in correspondence to his ancient design, and are every way consistent with the divine wisdom, sovereignty, righteousness, and grace; and answers several objections against this partly delightful, and partly awful dispensation, *chap. ix. x. and xi.*

As to the *practical* part of this epistle, we have therein exhortations to a great variety of *personal* and *relative* duties, belonging to believers, as members of civil society, and as members of the church, *chap.* xii. xiii. xiv. and xv. to *ver.* 14. And the whole is closed with an apology for the apostle's writing to them, and a promise of making them a visit in person, if the Lord will; and with begging their prayers, and sending Christian salutations to them, and a caution against divisions, together with an affectionate benediction and doxology, *chap.* xv. *ver.* 15. to the end of the epistle.

Several learned expositors have, as I apprehend, too much narrowed the design and use of the *doctrinal* part of this excellent epistle, especially as future ages are concerned in it; and have been led off from the true sense of the apostle by two mistakes. One (which relates to *justification*) is by their *confining* what he says, about the works of the law, to the *ceremonial* law, which, I think, as may be shewn in notes on proper places, is to be understood of the *whole system* of the religious law of the *Jews*, inclusive of the *moral* law. The other (which relates to God's *choosing* and *calling* the *Gentiles*, and *casting off* the *Jews*) lies in their *confining* what the apostle says on these points, to the respective bodies of those people, *nationally* considered, and to their *external* privileges, to the exclusion of the concernment of *particular persons*, in one or the other, with reference to their *eternal state*. Whereas I take both those views to be aimed at, in the apostle's discourse upon that solemn subject; where he begins with what is *personal*, relating to *saving* benefits, and proceeds to what is *national*, relating to *external* privileges, as may likewise be shewn in the Paraphrase and Notes on *chap.* viii. 28. to the end, and *chap.* ix. and xi. And the supposition of a national election, to the *external* privileges of the gospel, naturally leads us to think, that there was an election of *persons* among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, to *saving* benefits, who were to be brought to a participation of them, by means of the gospel: For this is God's appointed and ordinary means of effectually calling them, whom he has chosen to eternal life, *chap.* x. 14,—17. and *1 Thess.* ii. 13, 14. And therefore the *national* is so far from being inconsistent with, that it is inclusive of, and supposes, a *personal* election of some to holiness and glory; and is subservient to God's design of saving them, that the *national* election may not prove, in the event, to be abortive as to *All*. For my part, I cannot see any sufficient reason, why they, that allow of one, should deny the other; since it seems as hard to account for God's choosing to send the only ordinary means of grace and salvation to one *nation*, rather than another, as for his choosing to make them effectual to one *person* rather than another.

But no expositor, that I have met with, carries the *national* consideration of *ALL* the *glorious blessings*, mentioned in this epistle, and other parts of the New Testament, as well as those of *election* and *calling*, and makes so little of them, and so *entirely* confines them to *external* privileges, as the reverend Mr. John Taylor, whose Paraphrase and Notes on the epistle to the Romans did not come to

hand till mine were finished, and transcribed ready for the press. I have since perused them, and his prefixed *key to the apostolic writings*, with all the attention I am capable of, and with a sincere desire of receiving what light they might afford, for a better understanding of this important epistle: But, instead of reaping any such advantage from his laboured performance, it appears to me to be, by far, the most enervating of the apostle's whole scheme, beyond any thing I had ever seen before: And in a review of what I had prepared, for a publication, in the following sheets, there seemed to be little occasion to alter, or add to it; the principal parts of his hypothesis and interpretations having been, as I hope, sufficiently obviated, all along, in the Paraphrase and Notes.

Nevertheless, I cannot help observing here, in general, that, according to this gentleman's way of representing things in this, and a former attempt about *original sin*, human nature, in its intellectual and moral powers, and in its *spiritual* and *eternal* interests, hath suffered little, or rather nothing by *the fall*; and *ALL the great and glorious blessings, honours, and privileges of the gospel*, such as *election, vocation, reconciliation, salvation, pardon of sin, justification, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, the gift of eternal life*, and the like, dwindle into what he calls *antecedent blessings*, by which he means no more than *external, national privileges*, that belong to *all professed Christians among the Gentiles, the whole body of them without exception*; (pag. 41, 93.) and even *those*, says he, *who for their wickedness shall perish eternally, are undoubtedly interested in them all*. (pag. 98.) This he speaks of as being after the same manner, as the same blessings belonged to the *whole nation of the Jews* under the Old Testament; and, as he further adds, *the grace of the gospel actually extends to all mankind; and it is certain that all men actually have a share in the mercy of God and Christ Jesus, as appears from the universality of the resurrection*, (pag. 112.) So that, according to his account, there is nothing *internal* or *efficacious* in any of these *great and glorious blessings*, to distinguish one person from another, but *all the benefit of them, which he calls consequent blessings, depends upon a man's own virtue*. Upon the whole, he tells us, (pag. 96.) that *his chief intention is to establish a double justification or salvation, which, with him, are terms of the same import*; one is *antecedent*, merely by a *profession of faith, which is common to all Christians, good and bad*; (pag. 68.) and the other *final or consequent, which is the issue of a holy and obedient life*. Accordingly, he supposes that *the apostle argues about the first justification in the five first chapters of this epistle, and about the second in the sixth chapter*. (pag. 123.) That this is a fair and candid representation of his sense in the quoted pages, and in many other places, mostly in his own words, and never otherwise, unless for abbreviation's sake, I appeal to every one that has read him.

As to his notion about *original sin*, the reader may judge of this from the sense given in the following *paraphrase* on the passages which relate to that doctrine, and from the *notes*, which are subjoined to illustrate, or support it: And if what is offered throughout on this epistle, with respect to *this*, and other points most nearly concerned

concerned in this gentleman's scheme, be found to stand, as I trust it will, in the main at least, though I am far from pretending to infallibility; his sense of them must, of consequence, be all wrong, and extremely pernicious, to the bringing in of a quite new gospel, which the apostle never thought of. To maintain this, our *Paraphrast* is forced to alter the common, natural, well-known, and long-established use of the language, which he imagines himself warranted to do, as having discovered the universal mistake of mankind, in the ideas they have always affixed to it, by comparing a great number of texts in the Old and New Testament. (pag. 114, &c.)

Among the vast variety of constructions which he would put upon the words *righteousness* and *justification*, to serve his purpose in that large collection, most of them are so exceeding arbitrary, lax, and vague, that no determinate idea can be fixed to those terms, which may signify almost whatever any one pleases. Sometimes, it seems, they mean *justification and salvation*, in a sense of his own, different from the common use of the words: At others, they signify, 'moral rectitude in general; mercy and goodness; saving mercy, saving goodness; preserving, delivering goodness; deliverance, restoration, or the happiness that attends it; temporal deliverance and salvation; deliverance from death, from sin, and condemnation; a grant of favour, or of any benefit or honour; the donation of privileges, or honours, or, perhaps, prosperity and peace, joy and gladness.' To sum up all, he thinks they signify, 'ANY grant of favour, ANY instance of mercy and goodness, whereby God delivers, or exempts from ANY kind of suffering or calamity, or confers any favour, blessing, or privilege,' whether temporal or spiritual. (pag. 121.)

Having thus endeavoured to throw all uncertainty upon the meaning of these terms, by his numerous quotations, and his own constructions of them, he takes the liberty of fixing upon one sense of them, which is indeed least of all pointed out in his cited passages, to signify what he would make to be the most precise notion of his *first justification*, which, he says, *the apostle contends for in the five first chapters of this epistle*, namely, *The calling of the Gentiles, and their being admitted, upon faith, into the peculiar family and kingdom of God*: (pag. 125.) And he supposes, though doubtless many will be otherwise minded, that the various *senses* he has given, 'being duly considered, it will not appear at all strange, if the apostle applies the terms, *righteousness*, or *justification*, and being justified, to the important affair of our deliverance from the power of heathenish darkness, and our being admitted into the church and covenant of God, as we were idolatrous Gentiles;—and to all the honours, privileges, grants, and donations, belonging to the peculiar people of God;' (pag. 121.) evidently meaning, as in other places he expresses it, *to all that profess to believe the gospel, whether they be good or bad*.

According to this opinion, the greatest debauchees, the most dissolute and profane people, that profess to believe the gospel in this Christian nation, are as much *justified, and pardoned in God's* mercy

mercy and goodness, for ever to be adored, as the holiest saint upon earth; or rather there is really now a-days, no such thing as pardon and justification, with respect to personal offences, in our world, unless of converts from heathenish darkness and idolatry; no, nor was there any room for the pardon and justification of the believing Jews in the apostle's days; they having been free from heathenish darkness and idolatry; and so, in this author's sense, being all nationally pardoned and justified before: And yet the apostle preached to them the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; assuring them, that by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Surely then, when he preached pardon and justification to the Jews through faith in Christ, he meant something different from a deliverance from the power of heathenish darkness and idolatry; and something more, than they already were nationally partakers of, as the professing people of God.

And if, according to this writer's supposition, (*pag. 27, 293.*) all the Jews were already pardoned and justified by the *Abrahamic covenant*, then they obtained no other pardon and justification by believing in Christ, than they, merely as *Jews*, had before. And therefore *pardon, justification, salvation, &c.* in the New Testament must ordinarily have a different meaning from what merely relates to such privileges and blessings as were nationally enjoyed by the whole body of the *Jews*, without distinction; and this overthrows the foundation of our author's scheme, in his arguments from the correspondence of these, to those blessings, as though they were of the same import. And if it 'appears from the universality of the resurrection, that the grace of the gospel actually extends to ALL MANKIND;' (as he asserts *pag. 112.*) then the heathen nations, that never heard the gospel, shall not only be raised at the last day; but the grace of the gospel actually extends to *them* also, as well as to *professing Christians*. And what can be concluded from hence, but that all mankind, inclusive of the *heathens* themselves, shall have a *beneficial* resurrection to life?

He makes no distinction between *justification* and *salvation*, though they are so plainly distinguished in this epistle, *chap. v. 9.* where it is said, *Much more being now justified by Christ's blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him:* Nor doth he make any distinction between *external* and *effectual calling*, though the apostle expressly speaks of some that were so called, according to God's purpose, as to be both *justified and glorified*; (*chap. viii. 28, 30.*) and our blessed Lord says, *Many are called, but few are chosen.* (*Matth. xxii. 14.*) Nor doth he distinguish between *external* and *internal relation* to Christ and his church; though our Lord himself makes an evident distinction between those that were in him by *visible profession* and *external relation*, and others, that were also in him by *real union*; (*John xv. 6.*) and the apostle *John*, (1 Epist. ii. 19.) distinguishes between *mere professors*, and *real Christians*, saying, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us: But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*

Our apostle indeed speaks of *pardon, justification, salvation, &c.* as the common privileges of all in the churches of Christ to which he wrote, whether they consisted of *Jewish or Gentile converts*: But it was not *merely* on account of their *profession*, but of the *credibility* of it, and so of their being, in the judgment of charity, *real Christians*, as it was *meet for him to think of them all*; (Phil. i. 7.) and the better part of them were so in truth. Why then might not the denomination of the whole, as to their spiritual privileges and saving benefits, be taken from the better part of them, on a charitable presumption, that every one was what he credibly professed to be, till his behaviour shewed the contrary? In which case he was to be cast out of the church, as the apostle wrote to the *Corinthians* to do by the *incestuous person*. (1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5.) This carried an intimation that the special blessings of the New Testament-church, signified by an external communion with it, belonged only to sincere believers, and not to mere professors, whose conversation shewed that they were destitute of the saving grace of God.

There were always *sound and rotten* professors in the *visible church*, which were signified, under the Old Testament, by the *good and bad figs* in the prophet *Jeremiab's* vision, *chap. xxiv.* and, under the gospel-state, by the *wheat and tares growing together, till the harvest*, in our Lord's parable, *Matth. xiii. 24, — 30.* And as it appears from the epistle to the *Romans* itself, *chap. ii. 28, 29.* and ix, 6. that a distinction is to be made between *only visible* and *real Israelites*, and *Christians*; so *Every* and *All*, to whom gospel-blessings pertain, are not to be considered as signifying *all and every one* to whom the apostle wrote, any otherwise than as belonging to them respectively, in one or other of those different views: For though neither all the *Israelites*, nor all the members of gospel-churches, were *chosen, called, justified, sanctified, &c.* in a saving sense, yet many of them were so; and all these glorious privileges and blessings belonged, *at present*, really and effectually to these, and only presumptively, in the judgment of charity, to others. But unless there had been some, even among the *Jews* themselves, under the Old Testament-dispensation, that were *Israelites* indeed, and so were really partakers of these benefits, in the strict and saving sense, and might humbly claim them by faith as already theirs; it can scarcely be thought that they would have been represented, as pertaining, in the visible administration of the covenant, to the whole body of that people; or that it was not with a special regard to the *circumcised in heart*, which were always, more or less, among them, that such great things were said of them. Much less can any thing like this be imagined under the New Testament-state, in which not *national birth*, but *religious and moral characters* are represented, as necessary to bring us into a visible covenant-relation to God, through Christ, and give us a claim to all the privileges and blessings of the gospel-dispensation.

And therefore all this writer's large collection of texts, to give a new turn to the special blessings of the New Testament-church, as if they were *only national and external*, and were *equally common* to all professing Christians, *whether good or bad*, may be easily set to rights,

rights, by a most natural and obvious supposition, that the apostle speaks of these blessings, according to the judgment of charity, as belonging to the whole body of credible professors, while he must be understood to mean, that only true believers, who are often described by distinguishing characters, were really in the highest sense, partakers of them: And it was impossible that he, who did not know *the hearts* of all professors, should speak to, or concerning them, any otherwise, than according to their credible profession of faith; which is indeed the only rule of *men's* judging concerning them, and is the only *ministerial* warrant for admitting them to all the *external* privileges of the covenant, or for pronouncing its spiritual and eternal blessings upon them; but this doth not entitle them to, or secure their salvation, unless they be in heart what they appear to be in life. Hence motives and obligations to holiness and obedience were urged upon all professing Christians, as the means of God's appointment for arriving at eternal life, according to the inseparable connection which God, and the very nature of things, have made between holiness here, and happiness hereafter: And when the lives of any were inconsistent with their Christian profession, the apostle warned them of their danger, to excite their care and diligence, lest they should deceive their own souls, and fall short of heaven; assuring them, that the *unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* (1 Cor. vi. 9.)

Our author's *first*, *justifying* faith, and *second*, *working* faith, are really no other than *two different kinds* of faith, one in mere professors, and the other in sound believers, as the first is only *doctrinal, historical, or notional*; and the second is *sincere*, seated in the heart, as a *vital* principle there, and *productive of good works*; and so one is effectual to salvation, while the other leaves a man where it found him, as to his state before God, and title to eternal life. But why may not true Christians be said to be *savingly pardoned, justified, sanctified, &c.* through a sincere and cordial faith, in their first believing, as well as afterwards; and to be really interested, *as present*, in all spiritual and heavenly blessings, so as to be secured, by divine grace, from ever falling short of their utmost perfection in glory? For they 'receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by *one and the same* faith in Christ 'Jesus'; and all, that 'are begotten to a lively hope, are kept by 'the power of God through faith unto salvation.' (Acts xvi. 18. and 1 Pet. 3.—5.)

According to this gentleman's sentiments, the *Christian*, as far as I see, has little, if any, advantage of the *heathen*, with respect to eternal salvation: For he says, the *virtuous heathen* may be eternally saved, as well as the *virtuous Christian*, and represents virtue, as proportioned to advantages. (page. 104.) Hence it clearly follows, that *less degrees* of virtue in a heathen, are equal to *greater degrees* of it in a Christian; because the Christian's *advantages* are greater than his. Nay, according to this scheme, the *heathens* seem to have been in a *better state*, in some respects at least, than the *Jews* were in, under the *Mosaic law*: For the *Gentiles* were freed from the laborious and expensive services of the *Jews*, and from their bondage-framing

bondage-frame of spirit, which arose from the dark and terrible dispensation they were under; and yet the *Gentiles*, on account of their lower degrees of virtue, stood as fair for acceptance with God as the *Jews*; and the sins of the *Jews* were more provoking, as they were committed against higher mercies, means, and obligations, than theirs: And no one *professing Christian* is more beholden than another to the *wonderful grace of God*, which this author so much magnifies, all along, in his *first justification, pardon, adoption, sanctification, &c.* since, according to him, *all that grace lies only in God's giving these external blessings of the gospel*, in common to all that *profess to believe it*; and *equally interesting every one of them, whether good or bad*, in all its glorious privileges upon their *professing to believe*: But I cannot find that he has any great thoughts of, or says much about any, other *grace* than this.

He, as has been observed, says, His chief intention is to establish a double justification, (p. 96.) which he calls the *first justification*, upon *professing to believe* in this world; and the *second or final justification*, upon *our works*, when we have finished our course at the day of judgment. But, after all, the difference he would make between these, may, I think, be fairly accounted for, by considering the *first*, as *constitutive justification*; and the *second*, as *publicly declarative* in a *judicial process*, upon proper evidence of the sincerity of our faith, and consequently of the *reality* of our saving interest in Christ, by our works, which saving faith produces, and are necessary to be practised by those that are justified; and which, when brought to light at the great day, will shew the *impartiality* of the final sentence, that shall adjudge them to eternal life, on account of the Redeemer's righteousness, through faith in him.

And as to this author's darling notion, that the apostle argues about the *first, or antecedent justification*, which gives *no title* to eternal life, in the *first five chapters* of this epistle; and about *consequent justification*, which depends on our works, in the *sixth chapter*, (pag. 123,—125.) It does not appear to me, that the apostle argues about *justification*, at all, in the *sixth chapter*; but rather about obligations to *sanctification and obedience*, as the fruit of justifying faith. And whoever attentively considers the *justification by faith*, and *by grace*, which is discoursed on particularly in the *fifth chapter*, must surely think, that it is more than a *common national privilege, without any saving effect*, to the whole body of *professing Christians*, whether good or bad; and that it is such a justification, as shall certainly issue, through divine grace, in final and complete salvation, as much as any other justification mentioned in this epistle, or any where else in the New Testament. For these very persons, who are thus *justified by faith*, are said already to 'have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and to have access by faith into that *state of grace*, wherein they stand, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God;' (ver. 1, 2.) and of these very persons it is said, That, 'being now justified by Christ's blood, they shall much more be saved from wrath through him; and being reconciled by his death, much more shall they be saved by his life;' (ver. 9, 10.) and they that receive abundance of grace, and of the 'gift

'gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.' (ver. 17.) Hence it is called *justification of life*; and *grace* is said to 'reign through righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' (ver. 18, 21.) What expressions can be more peremptory and significant than these, to assure us of the eternal salvation of all those that are thus justified and reconciled to God, on their *first* believing? And yet it seems all these say nothing about a man's being entitled to heaven, and finally saved.

Upon the whole then, I am fully satisfied, that this writer's key by no means fits the wards; and never can unlock the true scheme and design of this epistle; or give us any just view of 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to the apostle's trust.' (1 Tim. i. 11.)

C H A P. I.

The apostle Paul, by way of introduction to the whole epistle, asserts his commission, 1,—6. Salutes the saints at Rome, 7. Blesses God, and prays for them, 8,—10. Expresses his desire and purpose to see, and preach to them, 11,—15. He then enters on his main design about the gospel way of justification by faith for Jews and Gentiles, 16, 17. And sets forth the sins of the Gentiles, to shew that they could not be justified by the law of nature, 18,—32.

TEXT.

PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

PARAPHRASE.

I PAUL*, who was formerly a bitter enemy to Christianity, and furious persecutor of its holy professors, now count it my honour to be the humble, obedient, and devoted servant of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners; he having, not only changed my heart, by his wonderful grace, but also commissioned me, by his immediate authority, since his resurrection and exaltation, to be one of his apostles †, and that particularly to the *Gentiles*. This then

NOTES.

* For an account of Paul, and of his being generally called by this name after his conversion and call to the apostleship, see the note on Acts vii. 58.

† Apostles signify persons sent; and the apostles of our Lord were the prime ministers of his kingdom, who were sent immediately by himself at his first setting it up in the world. There never were, nor ever can be any successors to their special characters, privileges, and powers, in after-ages of the church: For they were only such, as had seen and heard the Lord after he was risen from the dead; and were sent to testify his resurrection, as eye and ear-witnesses, and to publish the whole scheme of the gos-

pel, under an immediate inspiration of his Spirit; and they were furnished with miraculous powers, for confirming and vindicating the doctrines they preached, and conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by laying their hands on those that believed. And as Paul was made the great apostle of the *Gentiles*, he had all these qualifications for his office: He had seen the Lord after his resurrection, and heard him speak from heaven, 1 Cor. ix. 1. and xv. 8. and Acts ix. 4. He received his authority not from men, but immediately from Christ himself, who sent him to the *Gentiles*, and revealed to him what he was to preach to them, Acts xxii. 17, 18. 21. and xxvi. 16,—18. Gal.

then is my character, and *I magnify mine office*, (chap. xi. 13.) it being my highest ambition to be known and owned, and to be called by this name (*κλητος αποσολος*). The delightful, honourable work *, to which I was freely chosen in God's eternal purpose, and designedly *separated from my mother's womb*; (Gal. i. 15.) for which I afterwards was richly furnished; and to which I was solemnly set apart, and gave myself up, by the special direction of the Holy Ghost, (*Acts* xiii. 2.) as well as by the immediate appointment of Christ, This noble work, I say, is that of preaching the gospel, even the glad tidings of salvation, which God himself is the author of, and has made known, as the revelation of his mind and will, with reference to the gracious recovery of apostate sinners, among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, through a Redeemer.

2 (Which he had promised a-fore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)

2 Which blessed gospel †, though it has been but lately published in all its light, grace, and glory, is no new invention, nor the contrivance of men; but is entirely of God, who in former ages gave various hints of it by his inspired prophets, with promises of its being more fully and explicitly revealed in due time, as these are contained in the sacred oracles, which are differenced from all merely human writings, by the divine purity of their doctrines; by the holiness of their original, tendency, and design; and by the sanctifying effects which they are the means of producing in them that believe.

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,

3 The main subject of this glorious gospel of the blessed God, relates to his own eternal, and only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, your's and mine, and the only Lord of our faith, worship, and obedience; even that wonderful and adorable person, who in two distinct natures is both God and man. As to his, *human nature*, or fleshly descent, it was from that renowned patriarch *David*, of whom it was prophesied, that the Messiah should be *the fruit of his body, and sit upon his throne*. (*Psal.* cxxxii. 11. compared with *Acts* ii. 30.)

4 And declared to be the Son of God

4 And as to his *divine nature*, which is absolutely spiritual, and infinitely holy in itself, and preserved his

NOTES.

Gal. i. 1. 11.—16. and *Eph.* iii. 1.—8. and in this respect our apostle is called a *chosen vessel*, that is, a choice vessel to bear Christ's name. *Acts* ix. 15.

† The apostle no sooner mentioned the gospel, but his heart was so warmed and filled with a sense of its transcendent excellence, that he went into an high encomium of it, and of Christ its chief subject, in this and several following verses.

* Dr. Goodwin observes, on *Eph.* i. 1. that to *separate*, or set apart, (*αποσολος*) is to select choice things: Therefore choice sentences are called *aphorisms*;

God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead :

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name :

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

his human nature from all defilement, and so may be called *the spirit of holiness*, he was what he all along professed himself to be, and eternally had been, in the most eminent and exalted sense, even *the Son of God*, possessed of the same nature and perfections with the Father : And (*ἀποδείκνυται*) he was determinately avowed, openly proclaimed, and convincingly demonstrated to be so, according to the manifest proof that was given of it by the immediate exertion of his own divine power * ; and by the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit, which wrought in him, and undividedly concurred with him, in raising his dead body from the grave, to a glorious state of immortality.

5 By whom, as thus risen and exalted, I, together with others of my brethren, have been enriched with special communications of divine favour, and been freely honoured with the apostolic office : And the grace of apostleship, which I received from him, was designed, through his blessing upon my labours, to bring over *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, persons of all nations whatsoever, unto an obediential subjection of their understandings, wills, and consciences, to the authority of God, in believing on his Son Jesus Christ, and unto that spiritual and holy obedience to all his commands, which is the fruit of faith in him ; all which was designed for the glory of his own great name, in the salvation of their souls.

6 And, among these, ye yourselves, who dwell in the metropolis of the *Roman* empire, the head of the *Gentile* world, are called, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, to the knowledge, faith, and fellowship of the gospel ; and I accordingly, as the apostle of the *Gentiles*, (chap. xi. 13.) look upon myself obliged to discharge my office toward you.

7 To you therefore, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that are professors of Christ at *Rome*, and, in the judgment of charity, are the objects of God's special love, which discovers itself in its happy effects upon you ; even to you who bear the character of holy believers, and whose proper denomination is *saints*, which

N O T E.

* If the *Spirit of holiness* is here considered as expressive of the sense in which Christ was the Son of God, it evidently signifies his own divine nature, in opposition to what he was according to the flesh ; and so the antithesis is very beautiful between (*κατὰ πνεῦμα*) according to the Spirit here, and (*κατὰ σαρκά*) according to the flesh, ver. 3. But if we consider it as the principle of the power by which Christ was raised from the dead, for demonstrating him to be the Son of God, it may signify either his own divine nature, or the Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity. And yet, unless his own divine power concurred in raising him from the dead, his resurrection, abstractly considered in itself, no more proved him to be the Son of God, than the resurrection of believers by the power of God, and by his Spirit, *καὶ οὕτως* in them, (Rom. viii. 11.) proves any of them to be so.

which ye are called and obliged to be. To all and every one of you, my hearty prayer, affectionate salutation, and authoritative benediction, in the name of Christ, is, that the riches of free love and favour * may abound and be delightfully manifested, in plentiful communications of grace, and in all manner of prosperity, consisting of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences, and with one another, and all around you. May all blessings freely and extensively abound toward you, according to the economy of salvation, from God, even our covenant God and Father, as the original spring and designer of them all; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator, who purchased them by his blood, and conveys them by his Spirit.

* First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

8 As what I hear of the work of God among you, is matter of great rejoicing; so I, though a stranger to you, cannot but, in the first place, offer up the most chearful thanksgivings and praises on your behalf to God, my own God, as well as yours, through Jesus Christ, by whom alone all blessings come to you; by whom I am brought into a covenant-relation to God the Father; and by whom my sacrifice of praise is acceptable to him. (*Heb. xiii. 15.* and *1 Pet. ii. 5.*) I heartily bless God for the grace bestowed upon you all, which has wrought so effectually and so visibly on you, and especially on the *Gentile* converts among you, that your receiving the gospel, and your remarkable faith in Christ, even at *Rome* itself, notwithstanding all the temptations and opposition ye meet with there, is talked of with religious wonder and joy, and with high commendation, among all the churches † through the *Roman* empire;

A a a 2

pire;

N O T E S.

* *Peace be with you*, is well known to have been the common salutation, importing all prosperity, under the Old Testament; and it was used by our Lord, and by his apostles and seventy disciples, during his abode upon earth. See *John* ix. 19, 21, 26. *Matth. x. 12, 13.* and *Luke. x. 5.* But when the gospel-dispensation was set up in all its light, blessings, and glory, the salutation was usually changed into *grace* and *peace*, to keep up our view of God's free favour, as the fountain of all grace in us, and of all our prosperity or peace. Our apostle uses it at the beginning of all his epistles to the churches, and mentions a correspondent salutation, viz. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*, as a distinguishing token, which he wrote with his own hand at the close of every

epistle, especially of such as were transcribed by an amanuensis, 2 *Thes. iii. 17.* But it is observable, that at the entrance of both his epistles to *Timothy*, and of that to *Titus*, and of those only, he adds *mercy* to grace and peace, saying, *Grace, mercy, and peace, be with you*; which may intimate that, as various difficulties, labours and temptations, sufferings and dangers of ministers, are greater than of private Christians; so they most of all need *mercy*, to pity, help, and comfort them, and to keep them faithful under all their snares and discouragements.

† *The whole world*, is here put for the Roman empire, as it also is *Luke ii. 1.* because that empire then included the greatest part of the known and civilized nations of the world,

pire; every Christian being glad to report it, and to hear the report, wherever they live. And it cannot endear you to them more than it does to me.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,

9 For I can solemnly appeal to the all-seeing and heart-searching God, as the great witness of the truth of what I say; even that God, whom I serve not in pretence, or mere outward appearance, nor in bodily labour only; but sincerely, affectionately, and faithfully, with full bent of heart, and with the renewed spirit of my mind, in publishing, maintaining, recommending, and enforcing the gospel of his dear Son, which may be so called, because he is the subject and author of it. I can, I say, appeal to God himself, even as by a religious oath, that on all stated, and occasional set addresses to the throne of grace, I constantly bear you, in a very particular manner, upon my heart, and do not forget to mention you expressly in my daily prayers to him, that ye may be still more and more abundantly blessed with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit.

10 Making request, (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God,) to come unto you.

10 Yea, so strong is my affection to you, and concern for your further edification and establishment, that, among other things, I am continually begging of God, that (if it be his holy will) his infinitely wise and good providence would now, at length, remove all difficulties out of my way, and, by some means or other, give me a safe and favourable opportunity of coming to, and personally conversing with you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established;

11 For I find in myself a longing desire to make you a visit, that I may have the pleasure of seeing your faces, whom God has beautified with salvation; and of communicating further instructions to you, by the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, together with some new, or greater degrees of spiritual gifts, by the imposition of my hands, the better to furnish some of yourselves for ministerial work; (see 1 Cor. xii. 7,—11.) and the more abundantly to confirm you in the doctrines of the gospel, and in your most holy faith, which ye have already been made partakers of, amidst the temptations and dangers, that ye are exposed to, on every side, from the world, and from the false teachers that would pervert you.

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

12 My design in all this is, that we may rejoice together in the love of God to us severally, and in the affectionate expressions of our love to each other; and may have mutual satisfaction and delight, in comparing our spiritual experiences together, and plainly discovering, one to another, that God has wrought the same effectual faith both in you and me.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant,

13 Now, my beloved brethren in the Lord, that ye may not take these to be merely words of compliment,

norant, brethren, that I oftentimes purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

ment, or only expressions of a present flash of affection, I think proper to assure you, that the desire I speak of has been long in my heart; I having often seriously intended, and endeavoured, to turn my course to you; though hitherto opposition, hardships, and necessary services in other places*, have unexpectedly prevented me, when I vain would have been with you, that I might promote the interest of Christ at Rome, and reap such spiritual fruits of my ministry, in the work of conversion and edification among you, as shall abound to his glory, and to your own, as well as my account; even as, by his grace with me, has been the happy effect among other Gentiles, to whom I have had opportunities of preaching the gospel.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise.

14 Yea, as a necessity is laid upon me, and *wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel*; (1 Cor. ix. 16.) and as I have freely received my apostolic office and qualifications for this very purpose, I look upon myself obliged, in point of duty and gratitude, to improve them, as the Lord shall enable me, for the benefit of all sorts of Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; whether they be the more polite, learned, and civilized Greeks, among whom arts and sciences chiefly flourish; or the more rude and uncultivated nations who have little literature, and good breeding among them, and therefore are called Barbarians; (see the note on Acts xxviii. 4.) or whether they be the more prudent and sagacious, or the more weak and stupid, in either parts of these two grand divisions of the world.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

15 So that, upon the whole, ye may be well satisfied, that, as far as I am capable of it, and may have opportunity for it, I am heartily willing, and desirous, to run all risks of my reputation, ease, and life itself, to execute my commission, in preaching the blessed gospel of Christ to you, even at Rome, in the face of all opposition, contempt, and danger, from the imperial authority; from the rich, great, and learned; and from the numerous populace there; as I have already done it, not only in country towns and villages, but likewise in noted cities for learning and

N O T E.

* The apostle's being *let hitherto* seems principally to refer to the full employment, which the providence of God had called him to, in other places among the Gentiles, where the gospel had never been preached by any one else, which he particularly takes notice of, chap. xv. 19.—21. At other times he was prevented, by the special direction of the

Spirit, and an extraordinary vision, contrary to his own design, as in Acts xvi. 6.—10. And at others, by the opposition and troubles he met with in Asia and Greece, Acts xiii. xiv. &c. and so Satan hindered him, by stirring up evil instruments against him, as he laid in another case, 1 Thess. ii. 18.

and traffic, such as *Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth.* (Acts xv. 35. and xvi. 12. and xvii. 1, 16. and xviii. 1.)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

16 For, how meanly soever many people, and especially those of chief rank and figure in the world, may think of the gospel of God's grace through Jesus Christ; and how much soever they may despise and set themselves against it, on account of the ignominious death of its author, and principal subject, and of the poverty of its professors, or on account of its artless dress, and the sublimity and mysteriousness of some of its doctrines, and the contrariety of the whole to their pride and passions, lusts and prejudices, carnal notions and secular interests; and whatever reproach and ridicule I may suffer, for espousing and publishing it, it is, nevertheless, such an excellent and illustrious scheme, for displaying the glory of all the divine perfections in united harmony, and for recovering fallen creatures to the favour and image of God, that, instead of being ashamed of it, I count it my highest honour to own and profess, preach and defend it, and that among the great and learned, as well as the vulgar and illiterate: For it is evidently clothed with divine authority, and is the means and instrument, which God has appointed, and which his almighty power works by upon the heart, to render it effectual for the eternal salvation of every true believer; both of the *Jews*, to whom it was first sent, (*Acts* iii. 26. and xiii. 46.) and likewise of the *Gentiles*, the most learned of which are the *Greeks*, to whom it was afterwards published, and great multitudes of whom have received it. (*Acts* xiv. 1. and xvii. 12.)

17 For therein is the righteousness of God

17 For, in this glorious gospel, the transcendently excellent righteousness*, which God, of his own in-

finity

NOTE

* That which, for reasons mentioned in the paraphrase, is styled *the righteousness of God*, both here and in chap. iii. 21, 22. and x. 3. plainly relates to a *justifying* righteousness, which is the subject of the apostle's discourse; and this is called, at other times, *the righteousness of faith*, chap. iv. 13. because it is made known, received, and made over to us for righteousness, through faith. Accordingly, the apostle speaks of receiving the gift of this righteousness, (chap. v. 17.) and it is said to be *the righteousness of God, which is by faith, and through the faith of Christ*, (chap. iii. 22. and ix. 30. and x. 8. and Phil. iii. 9.) and so it is distinguished from the *grace of faith*, as it evidently is in this

place, where it is said to be *revealed to faith*, to intimate, that this righteousness is not faith itself, but is that which is apprehended and received by faith: And that this is the righteousness of *Christ*, which he wrought out by his obedience and sufferings unto death, appears from its being represented, as including a price of redemption, and a propitiation by his blood, chap. iii. 22, 24, 25. and from its being called *the righteousness and obedience of one*, meaning Christ, for justification, and being said to make many *righteous*, in opposition to the *offence*, and the *disobedience of one*, meaning Adam, which was to condemnation, and by which many were made sinners. (Chap. v. 18, 19.) And this still further appears from

God revealed from
faith to faith: as it
is written, The just
shall live by faith.

finite wisdom and mere grace, has appointed and provided, approves of, accepts and imputes for justification in his sight, and which his eternal Son, who is God, (*chap. ix. 5.*) and whose name is the Lord our Righteousness, (*Jer. xxiii. 6.*) has wrought out, and brought in, by his perfect obedience and atoning sufferings, even unto death. (*Dan. ix. 24.*) This righteousness, I say, which, on these and such like accounts, may be styled the righteousness of God, is now, at length, clearly made known in all its suitability and perfection, dignity, and efficacy, from the doctrine of faith in the word, to the grace of faith in the heart, which entirely and alone apprehends and receives it for justification, without the concurrence of any of our works for that purpose, (*chap. iii. 28.*) from first to last; from the faith of the Jew, to the faith of the Gentile; and from the weakest and obscurest, to the strongest and clearest faith, in either of them: So that every true believer, of what nation soever, or of what degree soever his faith be, all such, and none but such, are, and shall be, discharged from condemnation, and accepted as righteous to eternal life, as was hinted in the prophet's declaration, (*Habak. ii. 4.*) which was, not that, according to the tenor of the law, *the man which doth those things shall live in them*; but that the man, who

NOTE.

from Christ's being spoken of, as *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*, (*chap. x. 4.*) and as *made of God righteousness to them that are in him*, or that are vitally united by faith to him; (*1 Cor. i. 30.*) and from their being made the righteousness of God in him. (*1 Cor. v. 21.*) Accordingly to be justified by the faith of Christ, and justified by Christ, are used as terms of the same import. (*Gal. ii. 16, 17.*) See also the note on *Rom. iv. 3.*—But it is very difficult to determine the precise sense in which this righteousness of God is said to be revealed from faith to faith. Some understand it to signify, that the righteousness of God is revealed from an Old to a New Testament-faith. Others, that the righteousness of God, which is by faith, is revealed in the gospel to beget faith. Others, that it is revealed from the first faith, whereby we come into a justified state, to after-faith, by which we continue in that state. Various other senses may be seen in expositors: (*Vid. Pol. synopf.*) But that which seems to me to be the most unforced and agreeable to the context, though I do not find that

any have taken notice of it, is, that the righteousness of God is revealed from the faith of the Jew, to whom it was first preached, and who first believed in it, to the faith of the Gentile, to whom it was afterwards published, and who embraced it by faith; and so this passage refers back to what the apostle had said in the close of the preceding verse, about the gospel's being *the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* And this sense may very well consist, and fall in with others suggested in the paraphrase, and with one part of the learned Mr. Locke's interpretation of the phrase, who understands it to mean, that the righteousness of God is not by works, but by faith alone, according to *Gal. iii. 11.* or, that it is *wholly, and all through, by faith*; and so it is the same figure which the apostle useth in other places, where he speaks of *servants to iniquity, unto iniquity*; that is, *wholly to iniquity*; (*chap. vi. 19.*) and *from glory to glory*; that is, *wholly glorious*, (*1 Cor. iii. 18.*)

13 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of

who is righteous in God's account, according to the tenor of the gospel, is brought into, and continues in, a state of spiritual life, and is entitled to eternal life, through faith in the Messiah, of whom it was prophesied, that *he would surely come, and not tarry.* (Compare *Habak. ii. 3, 4.* with *Heb. x. 37, 38.*)

18 And this way of pardon and justification, is equally necessary for *Jews* and *Gentiles*, if ever either of them are made partakers of those inestimable blessings. For, to begin with the *Gentiles*, the just and terrible vengeance of the great God is denounced from heaven, the habitation of his holiness and glory, not only against the sins of the *Jews*, but of the heathens also: He has given them notices of this by the judgments which he has executed, in the course of his providence, upon sinners, and by the secret remorse, and louder clamours of their own consciences, under a sense of guilt; and this is now further revealed to them, by express declarations under the gospel state; (*Acts xvii. 30, 31.*) this various and solemn warning is levelled against all impiety, with reference to God and his worship, such as the atheism, idolatry, and polytheism of the heathens; and against all manner of immorality, with regard to others and themselves; who wickedly and unrighteously stifle, imprison, and suppress what good notions they have of truth and falsehood, right and wrong; and will not act according to them, nor suffer them to have their proper influence upon their hearts and lives, as their own consciences tell them they ought to have.

19 Though the *Gentiles* advantages have not been equal to those of the *Jews*, yet they cannot plead perfect ignorance; because, in opposition to their flagrant impiety or *ungodliness*, the very light of nature discovers some things concerning God, which are knowable, and are made known to them, and especially to some great moralists, such as *Socrates**, *Seneca*, and others among them, (*συνεως*) by the works of creation and providence: For God, who is the author of that light, and of these works, has therein clearly manifested those things concerning himself to them.

20 For he has not left himself without witness in the works of nature, (*Acts xiv. 17.*) several of his adorable excellencies, such as his almighty power, which

N O T E.

* See a large quotation in Mr. Henry's continuator from *Seneca*, of his self-condemnations, in the worship he paid to the ignoble rout of gods. And the story of *Socrates's* ordering a cock to be sacri-

ficed to *Æsculapius* at his death, though he was condemned by the *Athenians* to die for deriding a plurality of gods, is well known.

of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse:

he has eternally and unchangeably in, and of himself; and his supreme divinity, whereby he necessarily, everlastingly, and perfectly exists; which, he being a pure spirit, are not in themselves the objects of sense, nor can be seen by corporeal eyes: These, together with his transcendent wisdom and goodness, are sensibly displayed in their effects, and have been impressed, as legible and indelible characters, on the works of his hands, and particularly in the wonderful formation of man, the top creature of this world, (*κτίσις κορυφῆς*) ever since (*ἀπο κτίσεως*) the creation of all things; and these, being attended to with due reflection, are easily discerned (*φανερὰ καθόραται*) in his operations, and in the things that are thereby produced, with such magnificence and variety, beauty and order, as none but a God of infinite perfections could be the author of: So that the heathens neglect of him, and disobedience and opposition to him, are committed against so much light and knowledge, as leaves them utterly inexcusable.

21 Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

21 Because when, in this way, they could not but have some notions of God's being and attributes, they nevertheless did not conceive worthily of him, nor treat him like a God, suitable to his nature and perfections, by exalting him in their thoughts, and paying him that religious and spiritual homage, which they knew, or might have known, was due to him, and him only: Nor were they thankful to him, which they ought to have been, for the light he had vouchsafed to them, and for his giving them life and breath, and all good things; (*Acts xvii. 25.*) but they indulged their own groundless and pernicious fancies, and became exceeding corrupt in their perverse reasonings (*ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν*) concerning the nature of God, and the worship due to him; and, through the depravity of their wills and affections, their inconsiderate and infatuated minds were covered with the thickest mists of ignorance and error.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools:

22 So that, while they, and especially their *Greek* philosophers, made great pretences to wisdom and learning, above the rest of mankind, and particularly above the *Jews*, whom they despised; and while they were highly conceited, and boasted of themselves as the only men of understanding, (*φασκεύοντες ἑαυτοὺς σοφοί*) they, by all their wisdom, knew not God; (*1 Cor. i. 21.*) but were really stupid and senseless, like perfect ideots, (*ἡμιφανήσαντες*) in things pertaining to him and his service.

23 And changed the glory of the uncor-

23 And whereas God is the perfect, spiritual and uncompounded, immortal and invisible Being, who dwells in light, which no man can approach, and whom

uncorruptible God,
into an image made
like to corruptible
man, and to birds,
and four-footed
beasts, and creep-
ing things.

24 Wherefore
God also gave them
up to uncleanness,
through the lusts
of their own hearts,
to dishonour their
own bodies be-
tween themselves:

25 Who changed
the truth of God
into

whom no man hath seen, or can see; (1 Tim. vi. 16.) they, in the chosen blindness and depravity of their minds, have debased his glory, by ascribing deity to mutable, perishing, and contemptible creatures, and representing him by them, as though he were of their corporeal and corruptible likeness: Yea, so foolish were their vain reasonings, and so gross their idolatry, that they have infamously sunk his dignity and glory so low, as to imagine, that there was divinity in the very meanest parts of the creation, and to worship God under the shape of, not only mortal men, but even of the fowls of the air, and the beasts that walk on four feet, and of such animals as creep on their bellies; as if he were like them*. So monstrously absurd were they in their wild imaginations about the only true God!

24. And for this their wilful and detestable impiety and shocking idolatry, in direct contradiction to the plain notices he had given of himself, God, in his righteous judgment, withdrew his abused light and restraints, left them to themselves, and delivered them up to the vicious inclinations of their own hearts, (see the note on *John* xii. 40.) which carried them into the most flagrant immoralities, even unto an indulging of the most brutish and unnatural lusts, and going into the most abominably filthy practices of the ancient *Sodomites*, whom God destroyed by raining fire and brimstone upon them from heaven; (*Gen.* xix. 5, 24.) and as they had so notoriously dishonoured God, he suffered them, in this manner, to bring the most shameful indignity on their own bodies, between themselves :

25 Who set up false objects of worship, and parted with the only true God for vain idols†, which

NOTES.

* The apostle here manifestly refers to the idolatry of several heathen nations; among which we are told, that the *Syrians* worshipped *fishes*; and that the *Egyptians* worshipped, not only deified men, but *doves*, and various kinds of *beasts*, such as *oxen*, *dogs*, *cats*, *griffins*, and *apes*; and *creeping things*, such as *serpents* and *crocodiles*. Vid. *Cicer. de nat. deor. torn. iv. lib. iii. p. 337. 4to.* and *Virgil. Æn. lib. viii. lin. 698. in not. ad nūm. delyb.*

† *Idols*, and *idolatry* in worshipping them, are often called in scripture *lying vanities*, Psa. xxxi. 6. and *Yon.* ii. 8. and *falsehood and lies*, Jer. xiii. 25. and xvi. 19, 20. and xxiii. 14. and *Hof.* vii. 1. And the makers of idols and encour-

ragers of idolatry are called teachers of lies, Habak. ii. 18.; because every idol is a false god, or makes a wrong representation of the true God; and every idolater practically declares what is utterly false concerning him. And as the idolatry of the heathen is the subject of the apostle's discourse, *that is the lie*, in which, he tells us, they changed the truth of God: And their worshipping the creature more than the Creator (*μᾶλλον κτιστὸς ἀνὰ κτῆστος*) signifies likewise their paying religious homage to their idols besides, and contrary to, the Creator; though they did not generally profess to disown, and not to worship the supreme God. Thus the preposition (*μᾶλλον*) is used for besides, or more than, Luke xii. 13. and for contrary to, Acts xiii. 13.

into a lie, and wor-
shipped and served
the creature more
than the Creator,
who is blessed for
ever. Amen.

by nature, are no gods, (*Gal. iv. 8.*) and have no-
thing of divinity in them; (*1 Cor. viii. 4.*) and they
turned the true glory, that belongs to God, who is
a Spirit, into lying representations of him, as if he
were corporeal; and changed the right notions of
God, which he has given of himself, into wrong con-
ceptions of him, as also the true worship of God into
the most absurd and injurious idolatry: And, in this
way, they paid their devotions and obedience to mere
creatures, such as the sun, moon, and stars, and all
their inferior dæmons, over and above the homage
which they professed to offer to him, who is the so-
vereign Lord and Maker of all things: Yea, they re-
garded their false gods more than him; and so, in
effect, disowned him, who is, and ever was, and will
be, infinitely, necessarily, supremely, and unchange-
ably blessed and glorious in himself, and the fountain
of all happiness to others; and, as such, is, ought
to be, and for ever shall be, exalted, revered, and
adored by true believers on earth, and all the saints
and angels in heaven, who heartily join their *amen*,
and that with the greater zeal and fervour, and detesta-
tion of the wickedness of the idolatrous world, as they
have cast the most unworthy contempt upon him.

26 For this cause
God gave them up
unto vile affec-
tions: For even
their women did
change the natu-
ral use into that
which is against
nature:

26, 27 For this reason, I say, God justly deliver-
ed them up, without restraint, to the chosen way of
their own wicked hearts, and to the ungovernable
workings of such scandalous lusts and passions, as it is
a shame to describe in their unnatural impurity and in-
famy: For their inordinate desires were so monstrously
inflamed, as to carry even the modest sex into the
vilest practices; as they also did men, who preferred
a detestable use of males, to the natural and sober use
of females; and both these sexes, directly contra-
ry to the design of the God of nature, in the first
formation of their respective bodies, and contrary to
all inclinations and practices that are decent and be-
coming human nature, and suited to the regular pro-
pagation of mankind, went into such vicious abuses
of themselves, with persons of their own sex, as are
shocking to think or speak of, and not fit to be na-
med. And, by this worse than brutal uncleanness,
they debased and degraded themselves to the last de-
gree; which the great and glorious God permitted,
in his just indignation, as a suitable and deserved pu-
nishment * for their wilful and notorious idolatry,

B b b 2

whereby

N O T E.

* This is called *the recompence of their* said to be such a lie, as *causes men to*
error, that is, of their infamous idola-
try: For as that sin is spoken of as a lie, *err*; (*Amos ii. 4.*) and idolaters are said
to *live in error*, (*2 Pet. ii. 18.*) because
according to the note on ver. 25. so it is they are thereby led into such corrupt
notions

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient :

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

whereby they had run away from him, and cast the greatest contempt and disgrace upon him; that so they might read their own shameful sin against him, in the foulest reproach, which, by its own nature, deserts, and consequences, it brought upon themselves.

28 And as they were so very wicked, as to have no relish for, or inclination to search after God; but were averse in their wills and affections to him, and did not like to retain, cultivate, and improve their notions of him, as far as they had them; he, in a way of righteous retribution for this their enmity to him, and to the knowledge and reverence of his excellencies, delivered them up, like persons disapproved and rejected by him *, to their own negligent, undiscerning, indisposed, and disaffected mind, till, under its darkening and malignant influence, they committed such iniquities with greediness, as are not only disagreeable to the nature of man, and the light of reason; but most injurious and dishonourable to themselves, and detestable in the sight of the pure and holy God.

29 They were exceeding vile indeed, abounding in all manner of iniquity † against the second, as well as the first table of the moral law; such as every kind of criminal conversation between men and women, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 1.) and a base malignity of spirit, (πονηρία) like that of the wicked one, (ο πονηρος) as the devil is called, (1 John ii. 13.) who doth mischief for mischief's sake; and an eager desire after more of this world than God sees fit to bestow; as also an inclination to, and doing of injuries out of mere malice: (κακία) They likewise abounded in a repining, grudging temper at the prosperity of others; in wilfully, illegally, and maliciously destroying men's lives,

N O T E S.

notions and practices, as dishonour God, and carry them off from him into the way of all iniquity and ruin, and as are directly contrary to the first principles of the light of nature itself.

* As the word (ἀδοκίμη) here rendered *reprobate*, sometimes signifies *disapproved* or *rejected*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. and Heb. vi. 8. and at others, *unapt*, or *void of judgment* and discerning, 2 Tim. iii. 8. and Tit. i. 16. I have given such an account of it in this verse, as takes in both these senses; the last of which relates to the evil disposition of their minds and hearts against God, and the former to his displeasure on that account against them.

† Filled with all *unrighteousness*, seems to be a more general expression of their exceeding great depravity, as spe-

cified in the following instances, many of which must needs coincide with any particular view of it; and were it not that hatred of God is one of them, I should chuse to understand *all unrighteousness* to mean strictly all *immorality*, in distinction from *ungodliness*, as in ver. 18. But, considering that exception, I would rather take it for all *iniquity*, or *contrariety to what is right*, as the word (ἀδικία) properly signifies, and is often rendered, as particularly in Luke xiii. 27. Acts viii. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 19. and Jam. iii. 6. And so it includes all the following black list of sins against God, themselves, and others, which we are told by the ancients were very predominant at that time in heathen nations, and particularly at Rome. Vid. Pol. Synops.

lives, without any just cause; in strifes, contentions, and quarrellings; in subtle contrivances to over-reach and defraud their neighbours, and to impose upon them with lies and falsehoods; and in an habitual custom (*maxonibus*) of doing evil to all about them; and they were secret defamers of others by sly and artful methods, and that sometimes under pretences of friendship and pity toward them.

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despitiful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

30 They were also open slanderers of others behind their backs, or while they were not present to vindicate themselves; yea, enemies to the authority, justice, and holiness of God, and of his law and government; because they stand in direct and severe opposition to all their own beloved vices: They were likewise revilers of men, (*υβριστας*) and outrageous, insolent, and vexatious, in their behaviour toward them, in word and deed: They were puffed up with a high conceit of their own attainments and enjoyments; vain pretenders to more than they really had; and, not contented with common ways of sinning, they contrived new sorts of wickedness, and were as industrious to find them out, and put them into practice, as if, by *digging up evil*, (Prov. xvi. 27.) they were searching and labouring for hid treasure: They also, who had parents living, were perverse and refractory, disrespectful and undutiful to them, and paid no manner of regard to their authority, or to their wisest and kindest counsels, cautions and commands.

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

31 Amidst all their cunning to do evil, they behaved like persons void of common sense, reason, and conscience, to restrain and conduct them in things pertaining to religion and morality, and to their own best interests; they were so perfidious, that no promises, contracts, oaths, or engagements to God or man, would hold them, when they had opportunity to break them: They had defaced even the common sentiments of humanity to their fellow-creatures, and their nearest a-kin; parents themselves, worse than brutes, lost all natural affection and concern for the children of their own bowels; yea, whatever relations of life they stood in, when once they were offended, they would never be reconciled on any reasonable terms; and they had no compassion for the miserable, nor would afford them any relief, but delighted in cruelty and oppression. What horrible enormities are these, which spread among the heathens!

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of

32 And that, which inexcusably aggravates all this complicated and atrocious wickedness, is, that they must needs be convinced, by the light of nature, and by the doctrines of their wisest men and philosophers, of the just ordination, law, and will of God, against all

of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

all these detestable crimes, and that they have some forebodings in their own consciences of a judgment to come, when it will be found, that persons guilty of such transgressions deserve, and must suffer, the severest punishments for them, even to the worst of deaths: And yet they are such lovers of sin, as not only to go resolutely into the practice of these abominations themselves, but even to encourage, abet, and delight in those, that dare be vile and bold enough to concur with themselves, and keep them in countenance, by committing the same. Surely all this is abundantly sufficient to prove, that the *Gentiles*, persons of such hideous characters, can never be justified by any works of their own; but that they absolutely need a Saviour, by faith in whom alone, any of them can obtain this benefit.

RECOLUTIONS.

What a great and suitable Saviour is our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the Son of God, according to his divine nature, demonstrated to be so by his resurrection from the dead, and is a descendent of *David*, according to his human nature. All the blessings of grace and peace proceed from him, and are to be asked of him, together with the Father. How excellent is the gospel, that assures us of this! It is no human or novel invention; but is the contrivance of God, and was hinted and predicted by the inspired prophets of the Old Testament. Christ himself is the immediate author and subject of it; its great design is to bring persons of all nations to a believing and obediential subjection to him; his righteousness is therein revealed to faith; and it is the power of God to the salvation of all sorts of sinners that believe in him. What an honour is it to be the servants of Jesus Christ, called by his grace into the ministry of this gospel! They are under indispensable obligations to preach it; and they need not be ashamed of it, whatever opposition and contempt they may meet with from men on its account. And, O what an exceeding pleasure is it to them that are faithful in their Lord's work, to hear of the happy fruits of the gospel, though it be upon utter strangers to themselves! They heartily bless God, and frequently pray for them, and even long, by the will of God, to see and converse with them, that they may communicate some farther benefit to them for their edification and establishment, and may compare spiritual experiences for their mutual comfort; and they can humbly appeal to God for the sincerity of their professions of love to all the saints that are beloved of him.—What an undeniable demonstration has God given us of his being and perfections in the works of creation! With what exalted thoughts should we adore the great Creator, who is in himself completely and unchangeably blessed for ever! And how inexcusable are they, that stifle the notions he has given them of himself! But with what hideous, humbling, and affecting deformity, doth the corruption of human nature appear, as exemplified in the heathens! How vain and wicked are mankind in their imaginations; and what ungodliness and unrighteousness are they sunk into, in defiance of all the light of reason and conscience, which they wickedly smother and suppress! They do not like to retain God in their thoughts; they are not thankful to him for his benefits, nor will glorify him as God; but set up idols of their own, as competitors with him: They entertain gross conceptions of him, and make the most unworthy and debasing representations of him: They affect to dishonour him in idolatrous ways of worship by images, and pay the religious homage to creatures which is only due to the Creator: And, being left to themselves, there is no iniquity so abominable, shocking, and unnatural, but they greedily run into it, and take pleasure in seeing, and making others as vile as themselves, though their own consciences, did they duly reflect, could not but tell them, that they which do such things are worthy of death. How just is it in God to leave stupid and wilful sinners to the way of their own hearts, and to inflict the severest punishment upon them for all their iniquities. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against

gainst them, in the clearest declarations of his word, in the awful judgments of his providence, and in the dictates of their own consciences: And though they profess to be wise in natural things, and are too cunning in their ways of sinning against God; yet they really are, and will one day be found to be, the greatest of all fools. How impossible is it, that such abominable creatures should ever be saved by any righteousness of their own! And how concerned should we be, under all our sense of guilt and danger, to place our entire dependence on the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, that we may be among the just who live by faith!

C H A P. II.

The apostle proves, in general, that the Jews were as incapable of being justified by the law of Moses, as the Gentiles were by the law of nature, 1,—16. And gives a particular account of the sins of the Jews, which confuted all their vain confidences in their external privileges, as if these could recommend them to God's acceptance, 17,—29.

TEXT.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for where-in thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, dost the same things.

PARAPHRASE.

SINCE the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, of what nation soever they be, (*chap. i. 18.*) and since the sins of the Gentiles, against their small remains of light, leave them inexcusable, and incapable of being justified by the law of nature; certainly then ye, *Jews**, who are extremely ready to fall in with all that has been said of the Gentiles, and to pass the severest judgment against them, must give an

N O T E.

* Some have thought that the apostle here continues to speak of the Gentiles, and particularly of their philosophers, who declaimed against, and censured the vices of others, while they themselves were guilty of the same; or of their magistrates, who judged and punished others for faults which were as chargeable on themselves. Others suppose, that he more generally argues against all persons, of what character soever, that are apt to be severe in condemning others for their sins, and to overlook the same, or as bad in themselves. But, though the last of these senses may be very well included in the apostle's design, I rather think, that he directly intended the *Jews*: For continuing his discourse, all along, to the same persons, he expressly mentions them as the immediate object of his address, *ver. 17.* and proceeds from thenceforward to speak to them in the following verses, under characters which amount to, and explain his meaning in, what he here says about their judging others, and at the same time doing the like things

themselves. It therefore seems evident, that he here turns his discourse from the Gentiles to them, who, according to Josephus's own account, in several parts of his history of the wars of the *Jews*, were at this time exceeded by no nation in iniquity; but were far more wicked than the men of *Sodom*, that were consumed by fire from heaven: For they practised and encouraged unnatural impurities, and omitted no kind of wickedness, that ever was in the memory of man. And the apostle's addressing them in this and the third verse, under the appellation of *O man*! without particularly specifying what man he meant, might be to introduce his design in the most inoffensive manner that might be; as also to remind them that they were of the same common depraved human nature with the Gentiles themselves, and to put them upon considering the force of this general truth, with a particular application to themselves, as rational creatures, and as subjects of moral government, that were accountable to God.

an account of yourselves to God, and are liable to his wrath, as well as they. You, O man, whoever you are, or whatever your pretences be, are, at least, as much inexcusable, and incapable of obtaining life by any law of works, as the *Gentiles* themselves: For your magnifying their crimes, and censuring their persons, as the most vile abandoned wretches, that deserve nothing, but wrath and vengeance, is, in effect, though not intentionally, a giving judgment against yourself, to your own condemnation, as one who is in the very same obnoxious circumstances: For you, who set up for a judge of them, and are so unmercifully severe in your prejudices, and conclusions against them, are guilty of many of the same, or worse enormities, and that in defiance of much greater light, and with the high aggravation of a haughty, rash, and censorious spirit, in the judgment you pass upon them.

1 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things.

2 But how harsh and rigid soever you may be in your sentence upon others, and how partial and favourable soever to yourself, we, who are acquainted with the word of God, and know any thing of his nature and perfections, as infinitely holy, wise, and good, are very sure, that the declarations he has made, by his word and works, of his foreboding resentments against sinners, are highly equitable, and may be depended upon as the greatest reality; and we are equally assured, that the sentence he will pass, and the judgment he will execute upon them, at the last day, will be undeniably right and just, not according to outward appearances only, but according to the true state of things, and according to eternal rules of righteousness, and the truth of his word, against all those, without respect of persons of one nation more than another, that have been workers of such iniquities as are contrary to any law of his, which he has made known to them.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

3 And can any one among you, who is a man endued with reason and understanding, entirely dependant upon God, and accountable to him for all your thoughts, words, and deeds, Can any of you, I say, go into so vain, irrational, and injurious an imagination, as that you, who are so hasty and dogmatical in arraigning and condemning others, at the bar of your weak and fallible judgment, for crimes, which, at the same time, you yourself are guilty of, shall be exempted from, or avoid a sentence and execution of God's terrible wrath, when you shall be summoned to appear at his awful and impartial tribunal? There can be no manner of ground for such a fond expectation as this.

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

4 Or are you so sordidly ungrateful, as to slight abuse, and pervert, not only the common bounties of his providence; but the more excellent and abundant privileges and blessings of a religious nature, which in his free favour he has bestowed upon you, above the *Gentiles*? And do you take occasion to go on in your trespasses, and to insult and despise the rest of the world, because judgment is not speedily executed upon you, (*Eccles. viii. 11.*) but God mercifully bears with you, and exercises long continued patience, in deferring to punish you for your great and numerous provocations? Or are you so stupid, as not to apprehend, consider, and reflect upon, the obligations and endearments of his multiplied favours, and their tendency and design to overcome your obstinacy, and to melt your heart into the most ingenuous contrition and sorrow for your sins, with an utter abhorrence of them, and full purpose, by divine grace, to turn from them to that God, whose goodness encourages hopes of blessings, through Jesus Christ, to eternal life? This is such an aggravation of sin, as exceeds all that the heathen are capable of, who never were indulged with your light and privileges. And yet you cannot clear yourself of this heinous charge.

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

5 But (*κατα δὲ*) according to the wilfully contracted, as well as natural stubbornness and insensibility of your perverse heart, which is confirmed therein, by a long custom of sinning; and according to its unyielding and unrelenting temper, which persists in iniquity, and opposes the gospel way of deliverance from it, you are heaping up a huge stock of wrath, and daily provoking God more and more to inflict it: And this you do with as much diligence and eagerness, as if you were gathering together a valuable treasure; and, by persisting in your unbelief and other sins, you are perpetually adding fuel to feed, and increase the dreadful flames of divine vengeance, which at present, like a treasure, is in great measure hid with God, but is secretly preparing and reserved in his breast, against the great and terrible day of judgment, when he will pour out full vials of unmixed wrath upon impenitent and unbelieving sinners: And to shew that his resentment is not, like the wrath of man, passionate, arbitrary, and causeless, he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; (*1 Cor. iv. 5.*) and will make the equity and justice of all his proceedings therein so unexceptionably evident, that every one's own conscience, and the whole world of angels and men, shall be forced to own it to be the righteous judgment of God.

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds :

† To them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life :

6 Who will distribute rewards and punishments, with the utmost impartiality, to every individual of mankind, of what nation or profession soever he be, not according to the fallible and mistaken, censorious or self-flattering judgment of men * ; but according, and in proportion to the good, or evil nature and degree of each one's works, as they really are in themselves, and in the divine account, and shall witness for, or against him, as one who is, or is not, accepted of God in Christ, through faith in him.

7 As to those, who by a patient persevering exercise of an effectual faith in the Lord Jesus †, and practice of every good work, as its fruit and evidence, and that without fainting under discouragements, or fretting at God's gracious dealings with the *Gentiles* ; and who shall, in God's way and method of salvation, earnestly seek after that glory and honour, which come from him only, and which shall be perfected in the state of *life and immortality*, (*ἀφθαρσίας*) *that Christ has brought to light by the gospel*, when the body itself shall be raised incorruptible and immortal ; (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.) As to those, I say, who have such an high esteem of this heavenly blessedness, and are so desirous of it, in preference to all things else, as neither to be satisfied without it, nor neglect the appointed means of obtaining it, God, in the riches of his grace, will confer upon them the reward

NOTES.

* *Rendering according to his deeds* relates to the kind or quality, and proportion of his deeds ; and so is a description of the rule of God's proceedings in judgment, and of the persons that shall receive its different awards : For though it is true, that impenitent unbelievers shall be rewarded for, as well as according to their works, and the scripture often speaks of their sins as the *deserving cause* of their punishment ; yet it never uses such language with respect to the rewards of the righteous ; and (*ἀποδοῦναι*) the word here used, signifies *delivering or giving* in a way of favour, as well as in a way of desert. (See Matth. xxvii. 58 Luke ix. 42. and 2 Tim. iv. 8.) However, as the reward of grace is founded in justice, on account of what Christ has done and suffered, God being just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus ; (chap. iii. 26.) so the final retribution to the righteous as well as to the wicked, will be a revelation of the righteous judgment of God ; because it will be managed in an exactly impartial manner, with regard to Jews and Gen-

tiles at the last day, according as it shall appear by their deeds, that one or other of these characters belongs to them ; and will proceed on the ground of *Christ's righteousness* toward the believer, as well as on the ground of *personal desert* towards others.

† What is here rendered *well-doing*, properly signifies a good work, in the singular number, (*ἑνὸς ἀγαθοῦ*) and is opposed to *not obeying the truth*, in the following verse, which I take to be meant of not submitting to God's authority in the gospel, which is emphatically called *the truth*, *the word of truth*, and *the truth of the gospel*, (1 Thes. ii. 13. Eph. i. 13. and Col. i. 5.) and therefore *faith in Christ*, seems to be at least included, if not principally intended, in this *well-doing* ; though it is not for the sake of that, or of any good works which it produces, but only for the sake of Christ, who is believed on, that eternal life is bestowed upon any. See the note on chap. i. 17. and Dr. Whitby's notes on these verses.

reward of eternal life, in full consistence with his justice, on account of that righteousness, which is revealed to faith in the gospel. (*Chap. i. 17.*)

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath;

9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

8, 9 But, as to those that, like the generality of the *Jews*, are of a litigious spirit, quarrelling with God and his glorious dispensation of grace towards the *Gentiles*, or with any of the important doctrines of Christ, and with his servants for ministering it to them; and that do not themselves cheerfully submit to his authority, and pay obedience to his command, in cordially receiving the truth of the gospel by faith; but, on the contrary, yield themselves up, as willing servants, to unbelief and all iniquity, and go into uncharitable censures of others; God in his righteous judgment, will inflict the tremendous effects of his utmost detestation and vindictive justice upon them, which will bring unsupportable terrors and agonizing torments into the very soul of all those, that shall then be found to have been impenitent and unbelieving transgressors; (*2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.*) which vengeance shall be executed first of all upon the *Jews*, whose advantages have been greatest, even upon those *Israelites*, to whom pertained the adoption, &c. (*chap. ix. 4.*) and to whom the first proposal of the gospel was made; but by whom it was obstinately refused; (*Acts xiii. 46.*) and then upon the *Gentiles*, who, rejecting Christ and the gospel, shall no more escape than the *Jews*, though one and the other shall be punished in a just proportion to their crimes, according to the light and advantages, be they more or less, which they sin against.

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

10 But, on the contrary, I say again, for the encouragement of the *Gentile*, as well as of the *Jew*, that God will graciously bestow immortal glory and honour, attended with the sweetest harmony and delight, to their utmost perfection in heaven, upon every one of the human race, who shall be found to have been a sincere believer, and a worker of that which is truly good, upon gospel principles, and to gospel ends; which blessedness God will assuredly confer on the believing *Jews*, according to his former promises, and his gracious design in first sending the gospel to them; and likewise on all those *Gentiles*, that are, or shall be converted to the faith of Christ, and so become *Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise*, (*Gal. iii. 29.*) notwithstanding their having, for so many ages before, been *strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and being without God in the world.* (*Eph. ii. 12.*)

11 For there is no respect

11 For in passing the final sentence, and distributing rewards and punishments, at the great day of ac-

respect of persons with God.

count, God will make no partial distinctions of persons, either in their favour, or to their disadvantage, of whatever nation or parentage they be, on account of their outward condition, privileges, professions, or pretences, on one hand; or of their former ignorance and wickedness, on the other: But he will proceed exactly according to his own unerring knowledge of them, and the plain evidences that shall appear for, or against them; and according to his righteous rule of judgment concerning them; yea, he will deal impartially with all mankind, whatever their circumstances be.

12 For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law,

12 As to the poor ignorant *beatbens*, though, in their present state of darkness and idolatry, they are out of the way of salvation, yet their condemnation will be less, than that of the *Jews*, who shall finally persist in unbelief. For as many of them as have sinned, without the clear instructions, commands and prohibitions of the law, published at mount *Sinai*, shall be punished only in proportion to their disadvantageous circumstances, and their non-improvement of such light as they had, and not with an extremity equal to the aggravations that attend the offences of those, who have violated the revealed law. And as to the *Jews*, who have lived under, and in the midst of, the plainer light, demands and threatnings of the law of *Moses*, which was so awfully and publicly made known to them; every one of these, who has transgressed it, and rejects the only Saviour, shall be more severely dealt with in judgment, answerable to the higher aggravations of his sins, and according to the heaviest curse of this holy law.

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

13 For how much soever the *Jews* boast of their law, and vainly imagine themselves to be safe for heaven, because they are acquainted with the letter of it; yet they will find, when they come to be judged by it, that it is not they, who merely read, study, and hear it, that are righteous in God's account; but, according to the tenor of that very law itself*, it is only those who come up to its high demands, in perfect obedience to all its precepts, that, by virtue

N O T E.

* To suppose, as some do, that the apostle here speaks of the way in which any, that have transgressed the moral law, are to be justified before God, is to subvert the whole design of his argument, and to make him directly contradict what he says in winding it up, viz. *That by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight.* (Chap. iii. 20.) It therefore seems necessary to understand

the apostle, as here speaking of the proper tenor of the law, and the only terms upon which any one can be justified by it; and so, since none can pretend to have always performed sinless obedience, it clearly suits his main view, to prove the necessity of justification by the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the gospel, (Chap. i. 17.)

of its sentence, shall be acquitted from condemnation, and be intitled and adjudged to eternal life: Even as *Moses describes the righteousness of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them.* (Chap. x. 5.) But it is written, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them:* (Gal. iii. 10.) And therefore the sinning Jews need a better righteousness than their own to justify them in God's sight, as much as the *Gentiles* themselves, and will be undoubtedly condemned without it, by the terms of their own law, as the *Gentiles* also will be, by the terms of theirs.

14 For when the *Gentiles*, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

14 For when any of the *Gentiles*, who are destitute of a supernatural revelation, and so have not the written law, do nevertheless, by the dictates of natural light, perform some duties, which, for the substance of them, are comprehended in the moral law, that was delivered by *Moses*: These heathens, though strangers to that revealed law, have a rule of action in their own minds, which has the force of a law to direct and bind them, with regard to what they ought to avoid and do, in their behaviour toward God and others, and in the government of themselves.

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another)

15 They hereby shew that they have some remains of that natural principle of reason and reflection, which discovers the requirements and prohibitions of the law †, with respect to some general notions of good and evil, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and was originally written, as it were, by the wisdom, power, goodness, and holiness of God, in men's hearts. They have likewise such a practical judgment concerning themselves, with reference to a future tribunal, as is a swift and plain witness within them, whether they conform to, or violate that principle, which is instead of an external law to them; and at the same time they have reasonings in their own thoughts, whereby they pass sentence, according to the light of their consciences, and, by turns, either accuse, check, and reproach them for what they do amiss, or acquit, and applaud them for what they do well; and so they, in many instances, are conscious to themselves of their transgressing the law of nature: Unless therefore they have

N O T E.

† This shews that by the law, the apostle here principally intended the moral law: For the *Gentiles* were under no obligation to observe the ceremonial law; and it was only some remains of the moral law, that were written in their hearts, and shewed them their duty in many things which they did not comply with.

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

have a better righteousness, than their own, to answer for them in judgment, they will also be justly and unavoidably condemned at the bar of God.

16 The impartial retributions before mentioned (*ver. 12.*) * shall be made in that great and awful day, in which God will call the whole world to an account, and will critically search into, bring to light, and pass judgment upon, not only the open acts, professions, and pretences, but likewise the most private management, and even the most secret thoughts, dispositions, principles, motives, ends, and designs of all mankind; and this he will do by Jesus Christ, (*Acts xvii. 31.*) who will then visibly appear with divine majesty in human nature, as the great Judge of all, (*2 Tim. iv. 8.*) to pass a decisive and irreversible sentence upon them that sit under the gospel, according to its tenor, (*Mark xvi. 16.*) as well as upon other *Jews*, according to the law of *Moses*, and upon the heathens, according to the law of nature; (*ver. 12.*) and whose judging the whole world in righteousness, at that day, is made known by the gospel doctrine, which is not properly my own, as if I were the author of it; but a dispensation of which is committed to me, and which I preach by revelation from Jesus Christ. (*Eph. iii. 2, 3, &c.*)

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.

17 Now, to come still closer to your consciences, to whom I am most immediately speaking, (see the note on *ver. 1.*) and to convince you of your grand mistake in all your vain dependences on the law of *Moses*, Observe how the matter stands with relation to the chief of your *privileges*. You, who unmercifully condemn the heathens, are indeed commonly known by the character of a *Jew*, and pride yourself in this, as if it intitled you to all the blessings of your father *Abraham*, and secured you for eternal life; But you have only the name of a *Jew*, as you are so by birth and profession, without being so really, or in God's account, and in the best sense of that term; (*Rev. ii. 9.*) and you mightily value your-

N O T E.

* This verse, I think, stands properly in connection with the twelfth; and the three intermediate verses are to be deemed a parenthesis, as they stand in the text: For *there* the apostle had been speaking of the sentence that should be passed upon *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and *here* he tells us the *time*, when, and the *person* by whom it should be; and so, according to my gospel, may relate either (as some have supposed) to the gos-

pel's being a *rule of judgment* to those that are favoured with it, as the law of nature will be to the heathen, and the law of *Moses* to the *Jews*: Or rather, it seems by the connection to relate more directly to the day of judgment's being made known to be by Jesus Christ, in the apostles preaching of the gospel, as this phrase signifies, *2 Tim. ii. 8.* But I have taken both senses into the paraphrase.

self upon having the oracles of God committed to you, and being acquainted with *Moses's* law, and rest satisfied in this, without looking any further for justification and salvation; you also, with carnal security, glory in your profession of God, as your covenant-God, and as the author of your religion, and the object of your worship; and you claim his favour, as if it were appropriated to your own nation, and no evil could come upon you. (Mich. iii. 11.)

17 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law,

18 You likewise pretend that you understand the revelation which God has given you of his mind and will, and that (*δογμαζουσιν τα διαφαιρα*) you try and prove, and so learn to distinguish truth from error, and right from wrong; and are skilful in, and prefer the most excellent and sublime points of religion, as having been taught them by the law of *Moses*, in which you, like a catechumen, have been instructed, (*καταχρησιν*) from your youth up.

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

19 And you have such a fond conceit of your own nation and privileges, and of your own superior knowledge, and such a sovereign contempt of the poor heathens, that when you go about to proselyte any of them, you arrogantly take to yourself the high swelling titles, and the office, of your chief doctors and rabbies, in pretending to be a leader of the *Gentiles*, whom you contemptuously speak of, as stark blind; and vaunt, as if you were a great luminary (*φως*) to enlighten them that sit in darkness.

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

20 You set up for a masterly instructor of them, whom you look upon as the most ignorant, foolish, and stupid wretches; and you magisterially take upon you to be their tutor, whom you treat as mere infants in understanding: In this disdainful stile you speak of the *Gentiles*; and in this haughty manner you exalt yourself, who have indeed a shew and appearance of divine knowledge, and pretend to understand the true sense of the law of *Moses*, and to have a complete system and model of its injunctions and designs in your head, and in your practice, while in reality there is nothing like it.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

21 To argue therefore with you about the utter insufficiency of all these things to salvation, which you so vainly trust in; How shameful and inexcusable is it, that you, who thus vaunt of your own excellent judgment, and assume to yourself the honour and authority of giving instructions and injunctions to others, take no manner of heed to them yourself? As for instance, How self-condemning is it, that you who, according to the moral law, declaim against frauds and thefts in others, should yourself be guilty of the very same crimes? (*Matth. xxiii. 3, 4, 14.*)

22 You

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written.

22 You, who speak of adultery, as a heinous sin, and severely condemn it in the *Gentiles*, Are you nevertheless an adulterer yourself, and a contriver of means to countenance and indulge it? (*Matth.* xix. 7,—9.) You, who, with the generality of the *Jews*, ever since the *Babylonish* captivity, have a detestation of idolatry, and loudly censure the heathens for it, Do you nevertheless sacrilegiously rob God, (*agorizai*) of his sacred honour and his dues, as if he were not worthy of them? this you have done, not merely in *tithes and offerings*, according to the prophet's ancient complaint; (*Mal.* iii. 8.) but in still much more essential and important points*; such as omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; (*Matth.* xxiii. 23.) making void the commandment of God by your traditions, and putting him off with mere lip-service, (*Matth.* xv. 6,—9.) profaning his temple and worship, (*Matth.* xxi. 13.) sinking the demands of his law and justice, as if they could be satisfied by your own mean performances, (*Rom.* x. 3.) and denying him the glory of all his perfections; and particularly of his grace to the *Gentiles*, as manifested through Jesus Christ in the gospel.

23 You, that glory in having the law, and in your knowledge and observation of it, as your great privilege and honour, and as your security for eternal life. Do you, notwithstanding, cast contempt upon the holiness and authority of God, the author of it, by such violations of its moral precepts, as even the light of nature itself condemns? How can you imagine that, were God to deal with you, according to your deserts, you, after all this dishonour to him, should escape his righteous judgment? (*ver.* 3.)

24 For the notorious transgressions of his law, they are found with some of you, in direct contradiction to your privileges and professions, bring a reproach upon his perfections and government, word and ways; and give sad occasions to the very heathens themselves to think and speak evil of him, as though he allowed and encouraged, or at least connived at all your wickedness, and either would not, or could not prevent it in his own favourite people; and you, of this age, bring the same scandal upon the

NOTE.

* I cannot think that by *sacrilege* is here meant only the with-holding, or robbing God of *tithes and offerings*: For it seems from *Matth.* xxiii. 23. as if many *Jews* of that age were not remarkably guilty of this, and this is too low a thought to be mentioned as a crime of a like heinous nature with *idolatry*. I

have therefore taken in other injuries and dishonours offered to God, that are of a more aggravated kind, and better suited to the grand scope of the apostle's argument with the *Jews*; and were indeed a robbing God of his glory and his dues, to a flagrant degree.

holy and reverend name of God among his enemies, as you very well know is recorded to have been formerly done by your fathers. (2 Sam. xii. 14. *Iſa.* liii. 5. and *Ezek.* xxxvi. 20,—23.) How then can any of you expect to be justified by your own works or privileges?

25 For, as to circumcision, which you chiefly glory in, and have the greatest dependence upon, as though it were sufficient to secure you from condemnation*, this, indeed, during the Old Testament-dispensation, was one of your principle privileges, as it was token of God's covenant, (*Gen.* xvii. 11.) and a seal of the righteousness of faith, (*Rom.* iv. 11.) and so was an assuring pledge of his covenant-grace, and faithfulness to his people, and as it was an instituted sign of deliverance from the guilt and power of their original corruption; and in that view it might have been esteemed as an advantage to you, on supposition that, like the true children of *Abraham*, you were circumcised in heart, and especially in case, according to the obligation of that sacred rite, (*Gal.* w. 3.) you should have perfectly obeyed, not only the ceremonial, but also the moral law, which, among other things, forbids the *stealing*, *adultery*, and *sacrilege*, as well as the *idolatry* before-mentioned. (*ver.* 20, 21, 22.) But if you are a transgressor of the law, and live in sin, your having been circumcised in the flesh will stand you in no more stead, nor give you any more acceptance with God, than if you were a mere uncircumcised heathen.

26 Therefore, if the 26 If therefore any † uncircumcised profelyte of the

NOTES.

* The apostle here speaks of *circumcision*, as a principal and distinguishing badge of a *Jew*, and considers it, not as an ordinance still to be continued; but only as it was enjoined to the *Israelites*, under the Old Testament-dispensation. But what he says, in this and the two following verses, about the *advantage* of circumcision to the *Jew*, who keeps the law, and the *advantage* of the *Gentile's* keeping the righteousness of the law, and fulfilling it, though he be not circumcised, is very difficult to be adjusted in a clear consistency with, and subserviency to, the main scope of his argument. It is evident to me, that we cannot fairly understand his meaning to be, that sincere *Jews*, by their obedience to the *Mosaic* law, and honest *Gentiles*, by their obedience to the law of nature, were accepted of God, or justified in his sight: For this is directly subversive of the a-

postle's grand point in view, which was to prove the necessity of both *Jews* and *Gentiles* believing in Christ for righteousness to eternal life, because they are all under sin, as he observes chap. iii. 9. I therefore cannot but apprehend that these passages about *keeping the law*, must refer either to such obedience to the moral law, as was evidential of real religion in pious *Jews*, and in such *Gentile* profelytes as were not circumcised; or else to a perfect conformity to all its demands, as its terms of acceptance, in case any were capable of coming up to those terms. The first of these senses seems best to comport with what the apostle says about the benefit of circumcision to the *Jew*, and the second with the principal design of his argument in the whole discourse; and therefore I have taken both into the paraphrase.

† The uncircumcision, in this and the

the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh;

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

the gate, who truly fears God, such as *Cornelius* the *Roman* centurion, (*Acts* x. 2.) is found to be a religious observer of the duties contained in the moral law, that everlasting and unchangeable rule of righteousness; will he not be as much accepted of God, as if he had been a circumcised Jew? Certainly, as far as this depends on moral obedience, he would. Or supposing, for argument's sake, that any *Gentile* had always kept every moral precept of the law, would he not stand as well in God's account, as if he had been circumcised in the flesh? He undoubtedly would, since he was under no obligation to come under that rite.

27 And, on supposition that a *Gentile*, who continues in a natural sense uncircumcised, were to perform the moral duties of the law, in either of the aforesaid respects, would he not rise up in judgment against, and condemn you, who are so rash and forward in censuring him, (*ver.* 1.) and who, by a false dependence on your having the letter of the law, and on your being outwardly circumcised, venture to break through the obligations of the moral law itself? There is no room to imagine but that he would.

28 For he is not an *Israelite* indeed, in God's account, nor a true son of *Abraham*, entitled to life by the promise, who is so only in outward profession and appearance, (*ἡ τὴν φωνὴν*) as a natural descendant from him, and externally in covenant by being one of his race: (*chap.* ix. 6, 7.) Nor is that circumcision available to any saving purposes, which is only an outward ordinance, and mark of distinction visibly imprinted in the flesh.

29 But he is a true *Israelite*, and one of *Abraham's* spiritual seed, and an heir according to the promise, whether he be Jew or *Gentile*, (*Gal.* iii. 28, 29.) who is so in the inward frame and disposition of his heart, and is turned to God through Christ: And the true circumcision, which is acceptable to God, lies in the *purifying of the heart by faith*, (*Acts* xv. 9.) and in the *renewing of the mind* by the Holy Spirit, (*Eph.* iv. 23. and *Tit.* iii. 5.) according to the signification of that religious ceremony, (*Deut.* x. 16. and xxx. 6. compared with *Phil.* iii. 3. and *Col.* ii. 11.) and not in the mere cutting off the flesh of the foreskin, according to the letter of the law. (*Lev.* xii. 3.) The circumcision, that is of any avail, is such an inward holy renovation of the whole soul, as is neither discerned, nor applauded by men, who

NOTE.

next verse, is put by a metonymy for the uncircumcised; as the circumcision also is for the circumcised, in *chap.* iii. 30. and iv. 9.

who can see no farther than the outside, and are chiefly taken with external professions; but as is of *great price in the sight of God*, who searches the heart; and will, one day, *make manifest all its counsels.* (1 Pet. iii. 4. and 1 Cor. iv. 5.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How inexcusable is it to be uncharitable and severe in condemning others for faults that we ourselves are guilty of! And how great is their sin and condemnation, that are workers of iniquity, under high professions of godliness! They bring a reproach upon religion, and cause the name of God to be blasphemed by his enemies: They vainly expect to escape his righteous judgment; and many, whom they condemn and vilify here, will rise up as witnesses against them hereafter, for their abuses of superior light, professions and privileges. Yea, What an *high aggravation* of sin is it to practise the crimes that we declaim against in others, and to persist in them, against all the obligations and inducements of the goodness, long-suffering, and forbearance of God to bring us to repentance! This betrays the utmost hardness of heart, and is nothing less, than heaping up daily provocations to God's wrath against the day of wrath: The consciences of such may justly accuse and condemn them. But, of all others, their guilt and punishment will be the most hideous and intolerable, that persist in sinning against the plainest light of a revealed law and gospel too, and wilfully rebel against *both*, to their own perdition. How certainly may we depend on a righteous and universal judgment to come, which natural principles forebode, and which the gospel assures us will be managed by Jesus Christ, as the great Judge of all! Then every secret thought, as well as every word and act, will be brought to light, whether it be good or bad; and an impartial sentence will pass upon every individual person of all nations and professions, according as the evidences of their state before God shall arise from their governing principles, tempers, and conduct; and according to the dispensation they were under, whether it were that of the light of nature, or of the *Jewish* law, or of the gospel-revelation, that every one may receive answerable to the kinds and degrees of his works: For there is no respect of persons with God. But, O how vastly different will the final issues of things be to the righteous and the wicked! They, who, with faith and patience, persevere in well doing, shall be crowned with eternal life, on such a foundation of righteousness, through Jesus Christ, as shall clear the justice of God, as well as exalt the exceeding riches of his grace; and they, that shall be found among the ungodly and disobedient, shall have justice done them, in executions of wrath, without mixture of mercy, to their unspeakable agony and confusion. Alas! what man that has sinned, and so grievously sinned as we all have, can stand before God, if he enters into judgment with him! And therefore how dangerous is it to rest in any thing short of Christ, for righteousness to eternal life! The most self-flattering, specious, and privileged professor, is as incapable of being justified by any righteousness of his own, as the most confessedly profligate sinner; since every breach of the law destroys all grounds of confidence in it. But, after all, he is not a real Christian, who is only so in outward appearance; nor is that baptism, any more than circumcision, to be depended upon, which is only outward in the flesh: But he is a Christian indeed, who is so inwardly; and the only effectual circumcision, or baptism, is that of the heart, which, how much soever it may be unknown and despised of men, is clearly discerned, and greatly esteemed, by the holy and all-seeing God,

C H A P. III.

The apostle answers several objections against what he had delivered in the foregoing chapter; and so clears the way to his further design, 1,—8. He asserts and proves, that all mankind, Jews as well as Gentiles, are sinners; 9,—18. And applies all this to his principal point, concerning the justification of both Jews and Gentiles, as utterly unattainable by their own performances, and entirely owing to the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, 19,—31.

TEXT.

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God,

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith

PARAPHRASE.

IF it be so, as has been but now shewn, (*chap. ii.*) that the Jew is on the same foot with the Gentile, in point of acceptance with God, and that his being circumcised no more secures his salvation, than if he had been an heathen; it may be asked by some, who have gloried in these privileges, What possible advantage then can it be to any, that they are the natural seed of Abraham, born of Jewish parents; or what signifies their having been brought under the visible seal of God's covenant in circumcision, as a people peculiarly related to him?

2 To this I answer, Though these privileges bear no part in the grounds of any one's acceptance with God, nor can secure his salvation; yet, in the nature of means, encouragements, and helps, and in special marks of honour, the Jews have thereby many prerogatives above the Gentiles, as may be observed hereafter. (*Chap. ix. 4, 5.*) I shall, for the present, only instance in one of the chief of them, which summarily comprehends all the rest; and that is, because God himself, being eminently present with them, gave them various types, promises, and prophecies of the Messiah, and of salvation through him, as one who should spring from among themselves, and be first sent to them; and he committed the sacred writings to their use and custody; which may be called his oracles, because he himself dictated and delivered them, as infallible and important truths, to be their guide and counsellors, and a ground of faith and hope to that people, while the rest of the world had no such revelations of his mind and will. And surely there must have been a very great honour and advantage in all this.

3 Though many, (see the note on *chap. xi. 25.*) yea, the greatest part of the Jews, to whom the glorious promises were made, and were confirmed by circumcision, did not believe in the Promised Seed, when he appeared among them, and so rejected the

righte-

faith of God with-
out effect?

righteousness of God, which is brought in by him, and revealed in the gospel to faith; (*chap. i. 17.*) yet can it ever be supposed, that their ungrateful infidelity should defeat the faithfulness of God to his own word, or to them that trust in it, that he should not fulfil his promise to *Abraham*, and his spiritual seed, through all generations, according to his intention toward the true *Israelites*, (*chap. ix. 6.*) and according to their dependence upon him?

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

4 Far be it from any of us * to entertain such an unworthy thought! This can never be. But (3i) let God always have the glory of being firmly believed, and readily owned to be true to his word, and faithful in performing his promises to them that trust in him; and (3i) let every man in the whole world, if compared with him, be counted vanity and a lie, so inconstant and deceitful, as that no faith or confidence can be securely placed in him: Yea, let us abide by this principle, that God is and cannot but be true, though all men should prove to be ever so unfaithful to him, or to their fellow-creatures: And let us take occasion from hence to exalt God, and abase ourselves the more before him, according to what is written was done by *David*, (*Psal. li. 4.*) when he confessed his own treacherous iniquity with this very design, that God might appear to be just and true in all that he pronounced, in a way of threatening as well as of promise; and might stand clear of all imputations of unrighteousness, or unfaithfulness, and come off with victory and honour, whensoever any would presume to arraign and implead him at their bar, or would examine and censure his conduct; and whenever he shall contend, or enter into judgment with them about it.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what

5 But, perhaps, some contentious *Jews* among you may further urge, that if our wickedness and unbelief, in rejecting the Messiah, puts the greater lustre on the † justice of God in taking vengeance for it,

NOTES.

* *God forbid* (*μὴ γένοιτο*) properly signifies, *Let it not be*, and is used as a form of the strongest denial with abhorrence.

† That the righteousness of God (*Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*) here principally signifies his justice in punishing sin, seems plain from the close of the verse, where, in opposition hereunto, it is said, *Is God unrighteous, who takes vengeance?* and from the following verse, where the apostle rejects such a thought with abhorrence, saying, *God forbid: For how then shall God judge the world?* And

yet, as the righteousness, by, and for which, God justifies, is most commonly, if not always, intended by the righteousness of God in this epistle, I have likewise brought that into the paraphrase. And, as far as I find, this phrase is to be taken in one or the other of these senses, wherever it occurs throughout this epistle, though it may be dubious in which of them it is to be precisely understood here, and in ver. 25, 26. and in the former part of chap. x. 3. Some learned interpreters have indeed thought, from what follows, ver. 7. that by the righteousness

what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

it, and on that glorious righteousness by which he justifies the most unworthy, through faith therein, what shall we say to his excluding us from all saving benefit by Christ, and severely punishing us for our opposition to him? Is not God unjust, (*μη δίκαιος ο Θεός*) in executing terrible wrath upon us for that very sin, which, in this manner, serves, as a foil, to set off and enhance, and furnishes an opportunity for the brighter displays of his glory? (I personate a carnal Jewish man in proposing this as well as the other objection, according to his perverse way of reasoning about God, and forming excuses for himself.)

6 Detestable thought! (*μη γινώσκω*) as if God's glorifying himself, by his over-ruling providence, in bringing light out of darkness, and good out of evil, and pursuing his design of grace towards others, notwithstanding the wickedness of some, could reflect any dishonour upon his justice in punishing the sin, which, in its own nature, is full of all malignity against him, and his way of salvation by Jesus Christ. This can never be admitted: For were God, in any manner, unjust, how could he judge the world in righteousness? (Psal. xcvi. 13. and Acts xvii. 31.) Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Gen. xviii. 25.) it is impossible but that he should, who, being God, cannot but be infinitely just in his nature and will.

7 The objections therefore mentioned, but now, (ver. 3, 5.) against God's proceedings, are (as I have said) only the language of a vain, proud, and carnal man, like the prejudiced and unbelieving Jews, whose reasonings are all perverse: For such an one will still further urge, that if the veracity of God in fulfilling his promises to them that believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, hath also taken occasion to display itself, with the greater advantage, to his glory, by means of my infidelity, which is, indeed, giving him the lie; and of my wickedness, which is giving the lie to all my own profession of his name; and the whole of which, as sin, is a direct contradiction to the eternal truth of things; where is the reason and justice of my being nevertheless condemned and punished for it, as an injurious transgressor, who, in effect, have occasioned more glory than dishonour to him?

8 And

NOTE.

punishment of God is meant his veracity or faithfulness: But as it does not appear to me that this phrase is used in that sense any where else in all this epistle, I rather take the 7th verse to give us ano-

ther view of the Jews objecting against the faithfulness of God, different from that which was suggested and answered, ver. 3, 4.

8 And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) Let us do evil, that good may come? whole damnation is just.

8 And why should I not rather lay the reins upon the neck of my corruptions, without controul, and think myself excused, and even warranted, in committing all manner of iniquity, (*na*) to the end that the higher glory may redound to God's faithfulness, as well as grace, in freely justifying them that believe in Jesus? This indeed some of the carnal *Jews* do, in fact, maliciously and blasphemously report, (*βλασφημῶμεθα*) and even confidently affirm, that we apostles and Christians say: But as we absolutely deny, and abhor all such consequences of the doctrine of grace, which we maintain; so it is, and will one day appear to be, an act of the most deserved and unquestionable justice in God, to bring everlasting destruction, both upon such unrighteous slanderers of him and us, and upon every professor of Christ's name, that shall dare to abuse this great and blessed truth of the gospel, by thinking and acting at such a scandalous rate, in direct opposition to its gracious and holy design.

9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they are all under sin;

9 Now then, to return to your main objection, (*ver. 1.*) though, as has been allowed, (*ver. 2.*) we, who are of the *Jewish* stock, have for many ages had the preference to the *Gentiles*, as to many excellent outward privileges; yet are we in any better condition than they, as to finding acceptance with God, on this account, under the gospel-state? No, not at all; but, upon the whole, are rather in a *worse*, as our sins are committed against greater light and mercies, means and obligations, than theirs; we therefore still need a better righteousness than our own, as much as they: For, in what has been already urged, I have proved by a detail of notorious facts, relating first to the *Gentiles*, (*chap. i.*) and then to the *Jews*, (*chap. ii.*) that both these bodies of people are universally under a just charge of guilt, and under the power of sin, which brings a sentence of condemnation upon them, and binds them over to wrath, as considered in themselves, and in their respective conditions, without gospel-grace.

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:

10 And for a further demonstration of this point, particularly as to the *Jews*, who, through a high conceit of themselves, are with the greatest difficulty brought to a conviction of their sin and danger, let me add several testimonies from their own scriptures, which they are entrusted with, and own, and glory in, as infallible and divine oracles. There they are universally accused as transgressors, according to what is written in several places, of their fathers, and that mostly in one of the purest ages in *David's* time *; and

N O T E.

* To make the apostle's quotation of the following passages pertinent to his design,

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one.

and therefore cannot but too well agree to the present exceedingly corrupt generation : Thus, for instance, to describe their sad depravity by nature and practice, it is said of them, (*Psal. xiv. 1.*) There is none, that is truly righteous before God, by living up to the strict and extensive demands of his holy law : No, there is not so much as one.

11 As to their *minds and hearts*, they are so darkened and defiled, that there is none, who, in his natural state, has any true spiritual conceptions of divine things ; who really understands his own wretched condition before God, and the way of finding acceptance with him ; or who duly considers the revelation he has made of his mind and will in his word : Nay, their hearts are so corrupt, that there is none of them, who, in a sincere, earnest and believing manner, so much as seeks after an acquaintance and communion with God, or how he may be acceptably worshipped and glorified here, and enjoyed for ever hereafter ; or who has any right inclinations and desires towards him. God himself *looked down from heaven on the children of men*, and could not find so much as one among them, that was naturally disposed to pay any such religious regards to him. (*Psal. xiv. 2.*)

12 On the contrary, it was said, they are all apostate creatures, that have departed from God and goodness, and from the way of his commandments ; and so they are all, by nature, one as well as another, vile and useless God-ward ; unfit and unable of themselves to bring forth any fruits of righteousness ; and such is their native depravity, that there is none of them, who doth any thing truly and spiritually good ; no, not so much as one. (*Psal. xiv. 3.*)

13 But

N O T E.

design, it seems necessary to understand him, as applying them to the common state of the natural corruption of the *Jews*, as well as, or rather than, of the *Gentiles* ; one or other of the cited passages being applicable to every person, without exception, though some of them might have a primary reference to remarkable sinners in former days, and altogether being a strong proof of the common depravity of human nature. For if we confine those descriptions to particular persons of infamous characters, there is no force in the argument from thence, that the whole body of the *Jews*, without exception, as well as of the *Gentiles*, were under such guilt and depravity, as to need a better righteousness than their

own, even that, which is brought in by the gospel, to recommend them to the divine acceptance, which is the very thing that the apostle brings these testimonies to prove ; but, on that supposition, directly contrary to the main drift of his reasoning, there might have been, notwithstanding, many persons, that did not need the righteousness of Christ to justify them, through faith in him ; and more would have been put into his conclusion than was contained in the premises, when, in his winding up the argument, he tells us, ver. 19. the grand point in view was, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

13 Their throat
is an open sepulchre; with their
tongues they have
used deceit; the
poison of asps is
under their lips:

13 From this corrupt fountain flow nothing but corrupt streams: All the *organs of their speech*, as well as all the powers of their souls, are defiled, as appears in the following particulars, the most noisome breath proceeds from the heart through their throats, and forms itself into the most offensive and pestilential words, that are as loathsome and injurious, as the steamings of a dead carcase from an open sepulchre: Their tongues are usually employed in flattery, falsehood, and deceit; (*Psal. v. 9.*) they meaning one thing, and speaking another, in imitation, and under the influence, of the father of lies: They vent malignant designs, that are too black to be openly avowed, in secret slander and reproach with their lips, which wound their neighbour, as suddenly, incurably, and unawares, as the most desperate poison of asps, that is conveyed by their bite. (*Psal. cxl. 3.*)

14 Whose mouth
is full of cursing
and bitterness.

14 They likewise, in the rancour of their spirits, still more openly belch out hideous oaths and curses, and bitter provocations and revilings, as it were by whole mouthfuls. (*Psal. x. 7.*) Thus, instead of blessing God, and speaking things that are good for the use of edifying, they devote all their powers of speech, some in one way, and some in another, to his dishonour, and the injury of their neighbour.

15 Their feet are
swift to shed blood.

15 And as to the other *members of the body, and the actions* of life, they are employed in a sinful manner, answerable to the depravity of their hearts, and the impurity of their language; Their feet, which should carry them to every good work, are instruments of unrighteousness, used for running about, with speed and vigour, to do all manner of mischief, even to the shedding of innocent blood. (*Prov. i. 16. and Isa. lix. 7.*)

16 Destruction
and misery are in
their ways:

16 By these means, wheresoever they go, they spread ruin and destruction in all their paths; they bring death and calamities of one kind or other, without a cause, upon the heads of the communities and persons, civil and sacred, that they have to do with; and, at last, upon their own heads, as the just reward of their iniquity. (*Isa. lix. 7.*)

17 And the way
of peace have they
not known.

17 And so thoroughly perverse are they in heart and life, that they are strangers to every thing that tends to their own or others truest happiness, for this world and the next: They do not know the way of obtaining peace with God, or in their own souls; nor of promoting the blessings of solid tranquillity and friendship among mankind, or between themselves and others. (*Isa. lix. 8.*)

18 There is no
fear

18 Upon the whole, as *David*, justly concluded in his own mind, when he beheld the transgression

fear of God before
their eyes.

sion of the wicked, (*Psal. xxxvi. 1.*) They have no awful holy reverence of God in their hearts; no serious sense of his divine Majesty and authority, of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, of his justice, holiness, and goodness, or of their own accountableness to him; no fear of offending him, or of the dreadful consequence of it; no principle of real religion to direct their views, and to restrain them from any evil, or influence them unto any good. This is the deplorable state of the *Jews*, by nature, in common with the *Gentiles*.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under

19 Now to apply all that has been insisted on at large, about the sinfulness of *Gentiles* and *Jews*, to the chief point in view, with which we set out, chap. i. 16, 17. We know, from the very nature and reason of things, that whatsoever * the law speaks, in a way

N O T E.

* The learned Mr. *Locke* observes, that the word *law* (*νομος*) with the article prefixed, as it is twice in this verse, signifies, by way of eminence, *the law*, that was given to the *Jews* under the Old Testament; and that the word (*νομος*) without the article, as it is twice in the next verse, there signifies *law in general*, which extends to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*. But since the next verse is an inference from this, if the word *law* is taken in a wider sense there, than it is here, the conclusion is more general, and so contains more than the premises, which is contrary to all just rules of reasoning. I therefore apprehend, that though, when there is nothing in the context to forbid it, the article often gives an emphasis; yet in these two verses, the sense of the word *law* is the same, whether the article be prefixed to it or not. And that very critical gentleman himself, without attending to this distinction, takes the word *law* in one and the same sense, chap. iv. 13, 14, 15, 16. though in the three first of these verses, it is put without the article, and in the last with it. He also, and indeed the generality of expositors, make the verse before us, to refer only to the immediately preceding verses, which set out the natural corruption particularly of the *Jews*, by citations from their scriptures, which speak to them; and accordingly understand the law to signify the whole of the Old Testament, including the *Psalms* and the *Prophets*, from whence those quotations are made. But, though I would not wholly exclude this sense, I rather incline to understand this and the next verse, as the winding

up of the apostle's argument in the whole of the foregoing discourse, from chap. i. 18. to prove, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, are all under sin, and that the whole world is become guilty before God. (Chap. iii. 9, 19.) Accordingly it is said in the next verse, not that no *Jews*, but that *no flesh shall be justified by the deeds of the law*. And so the *law*, in this and the following verse, seems principally to mean *the moral law*, and to include the remains of it, that were found in the consciences of the *Gentiles*, as well as that particular revelation of it, which was given to the *Jews*: For the *sin* mentioned in the immediately preceding verses, and in the whole of the foregoing discourse, to which the *deeds or works of the law* are here opposed, were transgressions of the *moral law*, in one or other of these considerations of it: And this is the law, by which the whole world stands guilty before God, as it is here expressed, and by which is the knowledge of sin, as we have it, chap. vii. 7. neither of which could be said of the ceremonial law; that not being the proper rule of duty and sin, and the *Gentiles* having never been under the revealed law, and, by consequence, never capable of being convicted as guilty by it. Nor doth it seem very clear, that *whatsoever the law says*, it says to them that are under it, to this end, that every mouth may be stopped, and ALL THE WORLD may become guilty before God; unless we consider it as a law, which *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews* were under. However, were we to take it to signify only the law, which was peculiarly given to the *Jews*, and made known

der the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

a way of precept, conviction, or condemnation, it says to its proper subjects that are under it, and are acquainted with it, and bound to stand or fall by it, whether they be *Gentiles*, as it is made known by the light of nature to them, in the accusings or excusings of their consciences, and in their knowledge of the judgment of God against them that do evil; (*chap. i. 32. and ii. 14.*) or whether they be *Jews*, as the law is more clearly revealed to them in the scriptures of the Old Testament, several passages of which have but now been produced for their conviction, as directly speaking of them. Whatever the *moral* law says to either of these sorts of people, it says to them severally, according as, in one or other of these considerations, they are under it, that every plea of righteousness, on the foot of a man's own works, may be silenced and confuted, and he may have nothing to say in his own excuse, were God to proceed with the utmost severity against him, of what nation or profession soever he be; and that the whole world, whatever law they have lived under, and particularly the *Jews*, who are apt to boast of their own righteousness, may be proved, and forced to own themselves, to be transgressors in God's sight. They all are under a just sentence of condemnation, and have deserved, and are legally obnoxious to wrath, and to be cast at God's righteous bar, instead of having any thing of their own to recommend them to his favour, who has declared, that he will by no means clear the guilty. (*Exod. xxxiv. 7.*)

20 Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh

20 It is therefore evident from all this, to a demonstration, that by personal obedience, either to the law of nature, or to the revealed law*, no man living

E c c 2

upon

NOTES.

known in the scriptures of the Old Testament, still the *moral law*, for several of the reasons but now hinted, must be by no means excluded: And it is plain that many, at least, of the *Jews*, expected to be justified by their observation of the *moral*, as well as of the *ceremonial* law: For most of the instances of holiness, which the Pharisee pleaded for his justification, (*Luke xviii. 11.*) related to the *moral* law; as that he was not an extortioner, an unjust person, an adulterer, nor like the publican; and the scribe, that came to Christ, spoke of the precepts of the *moral* law, as more, or better, than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, in point of acceptance with God. *Mark xii. 33.*

Upon the whole then, when the apostle speaks against justification by the

works of the law, I cannot but think, that it is to be understood of all good works, of what nature or kind soever, to the exclusion of all boasting: (*ver. 27.*) And this I take to be of great importance for a due conception of the nature and design of his argument. (See also the note on *chap. vii. 4.*)

* *Flesh* is here put for *man*, as it is expressed, *Psalm cxxiii. 2.* from whence this is quoted; and the apostle might chuse, in this place, to use the term *flesh*, to intimate the original corruption of human nature, by reason of which it is become incapable of keeping the law, according to the sense, in which he, after our Lord himself, (*John iii. 6.*) often uses it in this epistle, as in *ch. vii. 5, 19, 25.* and *ch. viii. 1, 3, 5, 9, 12, 13.*

self be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

upon earth, in his present state of degeneracy, can ever be justified in the account, or at the awful tribunal of the all-seeing, heart-searching, just, and holy God, whatever he may seem to be in his own eyes, or in the opinion of other men: For the law is so far from acquitting any of its subjects from condemnation, that, by its light, purity, and authority, they are convicted as sinners, and brought to see themselves to be so, through their want of conformity to, and transgressions of, its holy, just, and good commandments, by numberless sins of omission and of commission, in thought, word, and deed, for every one of which the law pronounces a curse upon them. (*Gal. iii. 10.*) How then is it possible that the *Jew*, any more than the *Gentile*, or that any individual of mankind, be his character what it will, should be justified in God's sight, by his own doings in obedience to the law?

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

21 But though every door of hope is shut up in that way; yet, blessed be God, the sinner's case is not desperate; another, a better, and a safer door is now opened in the gospel. Here is a clear and glorious discovery of the righteousness which God has appointed and provided, accepts and bestows for justification, and which was wrought out, and brought in by, and resides, as in its original subject, in the eternal Son of God, who is himself God; but which never was spoken of, hinted, or provided for, by the *moral law*, nor is to be obtained by obedience to its precepts, either as made known by the light of nature to the *Gentiles*, or by revelation to *Israel*: And yet it is plain that this is the righteousness, which God all along designed for justification, some notices of it having been given before-hand in the types and shadows of the *ceremonial law*, delivered by *Moses*, and in his other writings, relating to the *seed of the woman*, that should bruise the serpent's head, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) and the *seed of Abraham*, in whom all nations should be blessed; (*Gen. xxii. 18.*) as also in the *prophecies* of the Old Testament, recorded by other inspired men, which spoke of him as *the Lord our Righteousness*; and *the Lord, in whom we have righteousness, and shall be justified*; whose name is *Jehovah our Righteousness*; and who should bring in *everlasting righteousness*. (*Isa. xlv. 24, 25. Jer. xxiii. 6. and Dan. ix. 24.*) So that to him gave all the *prophets* witness, that, through his name, whosoever believes in him, shall receive remission of sin. (*Acts x. 43.*)

22 Even the righteousness of God

22 By this righteousness of God, I do not mean the essential rectitude of the divine nature, nor the

God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;

righteousness of any mere creature, as though God had ordained any of these for justification: But I mean the mediatorial suretyship righteousness of Jesus Christ God-man, which consists of his active and passive obedience to the law, in the room and stead of sinners, (*ver. 24, 25. and chap. v. 19. and x. 4. see the notes there, and on chap. i. 17.*) which, for its transcendent excellence and glory, as well as on other accounts, may be styled the righteousness of God, and which, being received by faith in Jesus Christ, is, by the gracious constitution of God in the gospel, judicially made over, reckoned, imputed, or placed to the account of, and put like a garment of salvation upon, every one that believes in him, of what nation or character soever he be: For, with respect to this great blessing, and the way of conveying it, there is no difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*, the greater and lesser sinner, or the weaker and stronger believer among either of them; but they are all alike equally, and perfectly interested in it, and justified by it, and that in the same way of believing, as they all, one as well as another, must be, if ever they are saved.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

23 For, as has been shewn at large in the foregoing discourse, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, all and every one of both these sorts of people, are sinners before God, and have thereby failed of, and become incapable of attaining the glory of his holy image in them, the glory which they ought to have brought to him, and the glory of a beatific vision and enjoyment of him; and so neither of them have any thing of their own to glory in, as a recommendation of them to his acceptance, but must be entirely beholden for it to his rich mercy, through the righteousness of Christ.

24 Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

24 One as well as the other, being acquitted from condemnation, and entitled to eternal life, merely by the free and sovereign favour of God, as its original first moving cause*, without any desert in themselves, but on account, and in virtue of that righteousness of Christ, which includes an infinitely valuable price of redemption; a price, that was paid by his obedience and sufferings to death for them, and is in him as an inexhaustible fund of merit to be applied to them:

And

NOTE.

* With respect to God, justification is of mere grace, (*ἐν αὐτοῦ χάριτι*) and with respect to us, it is without merit: (*ὡν*) it is rendered by the *Seventy* (*δωρεάν*) seems to be here used, not so much to signify, that it is a free gift, as it is called (*χάρισμα*) *chap. v. 16.* and as is strongly included in its being said to be by his grace; as to shew that it is without a cause in us, there

being nothing in us to move God to it. Thus, answerable to the Hebrew word (*וְהָיָה*) it is rendered by the *Seventy* (*δωρεάν*) without a cause. *Psal. xxxv. 7, 19. and lxix. 4;* and our Lord said of his enemies, referring to *Psal. xxxv. 19. They hated me WITHOUT A CAUSE.* (*δωρεάν*) *John xv. 25.*

And this is fully consistent with the utmost freedom of his grace, who from the mere propension of his own love, without any obligation laid upon him, admitted of this ransom; yea, appointed, provided, and accepted it for them; and gratuitously places it to their account, and enables them to receive it, through faith in his Son.

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

25 Whom God the Father (*πατήρ*) has, in his eternal counsels, predetermined, and as it were presented to himself, as a fit mediator, whom he delighted in; (*1/a. xlii. 1.*) whom he has also given notice of before-hand in the types, shadows, and prophecies of the Old Testament; and has now exhibited openly in his incarnation, and proposed in the gospel, as a propitiatory sacrifice; on account of which God appears on a mercy-seat, (*ἐλεησέων*) that sinners of all nations and characters, may approach him with humble boldness, and find acceptance with him, in a way of believing on the atoning death and sufferings of Christ: His end and design in all which is, (*ὥς ὅτι*) to demonstrate the glory of his justice*, together with the perfection of the Redeemer's righteousness, whereby it was satisfied, and provision was honourably made for the pardon of the sins of believing *Gentiles*, who, through the patience of God towards them, have been suffered to go on in their trespasses a great while; and also for the remission of the sins of those believers under the Old Testament, whom in his great long-suffering he bore with, in view of what Christ, as their Surety, had engaged, and in due time would come to perform in a way of satisfaction for them.

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

26 He has done all this, I say, to display now in the fulness of time, under the gospel-dispensation, his own essential rectitude, and its righteous demands, as well as the justifying righteousness brought in by Christ, which he has appointed and accepts, that he might secure the rights of his justice, as well as shew forth the riches of his grace; and so might advance the glory of both these perfections, with an entire harmony,

N O T E.

* That which in this and the next verse is called *his righteousness*, (*δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ*) and in the former part of chap. x. 3. the *righteousness of God*, (*τοῦ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*) is understood by many good interpreters to mean the *essential righteousness* or *punitive justice* of God; and by others, that righteousness by and for which God *justifies* them that believe in Jesus. The last of these senses seems to keep up the most uniform

idea of the apostle's use of these terms, in other parts of this epistle. (See the note on ver. 5.) And yet, as the other sense here and in chap. x. 3. is very consistent with, and seems to add strength and beauty to the apostle's way of reasoning on this subject, I have included both, leaving the reader to chuse that which pleases him best, while I prefer the first.

harmony, in his justifying every one, who by faith receives, and depends upon the only Saviour.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

27 Since therefore all are sinners, and none are pardoned and justified, unless it be merely by the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them in a way of believing; What room is there for any one, and particularly for any Jew, that has obtained mercy, to glory in himself, and despise others, as if his acceptance with God proceeded from his being more worthy, or having done better than they? there is no shadow of pretence for any thing of this kind. But by what * doctrine is all this shut out? Is it by that, which makes our justification to depend upon our own good works? No, by no means; for that would puff up our pride, and make us ascribe to ourselves some of the honour at least, which is only due to God. But it is utterly excluded by that doctrine, which refers this great blessing entirely and alone to the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ.

28 Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

28 Therefore, upon the whole, the conclusion is clear and strong, and ought to be owned to the glory of God, and the humbling of the sinner at his foot, (1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31.) that a man, of what nation or character soever, is discharged from guilt and condemnation, and is accepted as righteous before God, merely through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith; and not at all by his own performances in obedience to any law †, no, not to the law of Moses itself in any view of it, as the righteousness that entitles to eternal life.

29 It be the God

29 Is God then, in this new and enlarged dispensation

NOTES.

* Any doctrine of God, whether consisting of precepts or free promises, may be styled a *law*; because, upon its being made known, it binds the conscience, by divine authority, to receive it; and when it relates to the gospel-constitution, it sets out the order of God's actings in a way of grace towards us, together with our obligations to act towards him in a way of duty. Thus the term *law* is often used in a *law* sense for the whole of God's revealed will, and sometimes chiefly, or at least inclusively, with respect to his *promises* and the *doctrines of grace*, as in *Psal. i. 2.* and *xix. 7.* and *xiv. 12.* and *cxi. 18.* *77. 92. 97.* *Isa. ii. 3.* and *Mich. iv. 2.* And it seems necessary to understand it in one branch of this verse, as signifying a doctrine of pure grace; because that, which is here called the *law of faith*, is direct-

ly opposed to the *law of works*; and is such a doctrine as excludes all boasting; neither of which is consistent with the supposition of faith's being a good work, by; and for the performance of which, in obedience to a law, we are entitled to eternal life: For then it would be a law of works, and would leave room for boasting. Vid. *Calv. Ben. and Piscat.*

† Justified without the deeds of the law, evidently excludes from justification all works of righteousness in obedience to any law whatsoever: For these works stand opposed to all the sinful works of both *Jews and Gentiles*, which the apostle had been speaking of, at large, in this and the two foregoing chapters, and by reason of which he concluded, ver. 20. that *by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in God's sight.*

God of the Jews only? *is he not also of the Gentiles?* Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

sation of grace, a covenant-God only to the Jews, as he was in Old-Testament times? Has he not now taken the *Gentiles* likewise into a covenant of saving benefits, though for many former ages they were not his people? Yes certainly, he is now as much the God of all grace to believing *Gentiles* as Jews. He is alike the God of both;

30 Since, according to a prophecy of gospel-times, that *the Lord should be King over all the earth, and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.* (Zech. xiv. 9.) He is one and the same God, in a covenant way, and by the same means, to persons of all nations; even that God, who will justify the circumcised Jew by faith, and the uncircumcised *Gentile* through faith; *by and through* (εἰς and διὰ) in this case meaning one and the same thing: So that, as was said (ver. 22.) there is no national difference, as to the *persons*, whom God will justify, or as to the way of his doing it.

31 Do we then, as some would injuriously suggest, invalidate and abrogate * the *moral law*, or set it aside and render it useless and insignificant, by this doctrine of faith, which excludes all works of our own from entering into our justification in God's sight? No, (μὴ γινώσκω) far be it from us; we abhor the thought. Nay, on the contrary, though we renounce it, as a broken covenant, that cannot give life, on account of our own personal obedience to it, which is so very defective; and though we maintain that believers are delivered from its curse; yet we approve of, and confirm the authority of God in his law, and in the representations it makes of his holy nature and will: We likewise insist, that it has been highly honoured in a full answer to all its demands, on our behalf, by that glorious righteousness of Christ, in which we believe for justification; and we regard it still, as a means, in the hand of the Spirit, of convincing us of sin, and of our need of this perfect righteousness, and as a complete, unchangeable, and obligatory rule of life, for a spiritual and holy obedience to which, as such, the most effectual motives and assistances are afforded, by the grace of the gospel, to them that believe: And so in every valuable consideration we thoroughly establish the moral law, and

N O T E.

* 'Tis plain to me that *the law*, here intended, is the *moral law*, as an eternal rule of righteousness, because of *that* the apostle had been chiefly discoursing in the greatest part of the foregoing context; (see the note on ver. 19.) and the

ceremonial law was designed to be *abolished*, rather than *established*, by the gospel; as the law, under the notion of a covenant of works with its penalty, *is so was*.

and make it stand (*firmus*) in full force, by the doctrine of justification alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

RECOLLECTIONS.

It is a great privilege to enjoy the word and ordinances of divine appointment, and yet exceeding dangerous to rest in them: But how much soever some may pervert and abuse them, they shall have saving effects on those that belong to God, who may be entirely depended upon, as unchangeably faithful and true, and will one day appear to be so, though all mankind should prove to be liars, and no confidence could be placed in them.—How do scripture and experience witness to the universal depravity of the whole human race! All, in their fallen state of nature, are under the guilt and power of sin: It shews itself under various forms, in the thoughts of the heart, the words of the lips, and the actions of the life; in an estrangement from God, and an injurious behaviour toward men; and in unprofitable and destructive courses to ourselves, as well as others: So that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and there is none righteous, none that has the true fear of God, or that doth good, as of himself, and without defect, no, not one. O whole mouth must not be stopped, that reads his guilt and depravity in the light of God's law, by which is the knowledge of sin! And how clear must the evidence be to such a man's conscience, that by the deeds of the moral law itself, he never can be justified in the sight of God. But how glorious and complete is the righteousness of Christ, which is revealed, and proposed to our acceptance in the gospel! Its infinite dignity and well-pleasingness to God, as the righteousness of a divine surety, and as answerable to all the demands of law and justice, put an exceeding glory upon it, and render it just such a righteousness as we need to recommend us to the favour of God: It includes the atonement of sin, and a free pardon to the believing sinner on its account; and is the foundation of a throne of grace for such to apply to, with holy freedom and acceptance: And the witness given to it in the Old Testament, together with the plainer discoveries of the New, are sufficient to embolden our faith and humble dependence upon it, whatever our iniquities, or our threatening and discouraging circumstances have been. How sweetly do justice and grace harmonize in a justification, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! And how extensive is the grace of the gospel! It reaches to greater and lesser sinners, to sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*: The same God is a covenant God to one as well as another; and the same way of justification is opened to both, not by any works of their own, but entirely and alone through faith in the righteousness of Christ, which is made over by gracious imputation to every true believer, for the remission of past sins, and for the continuance of his state of favour with God, as it is abidingly and everlastingly upon all such, without difference. How concerned then should we be to receive this righteousness by faith, that we may stand accepted in the Beloved; and to know the grace of God in truth, that we may live under its powerful influence, and may practically shew that it doth not lead to licentiousness, nor will suffer us, on any consideration whatsoever, to do evil, that good may come! While therefore we humbly renounce all trust and confidence in ourselves, and glory only in the Lord, How careful and conscientious should we be, to observe the law of our creation, as an unchangeable rule of life, and to improve the grace of the gospel, for exciting and enabling us to yield an unfeigned and impartial obedience to the moral law! Upon the whole, How groundless and unreasonable, how unjust and dishonourable, are all cavils against the veracity, holiness, and righteousness of God, and the freeness of his grace, in the justification of every one that believes in Jesus!

C H A P. IV.

The doctrine of justification by faith, as pertaining to the Gentiles as well as Jews, is further illustrated by the case of Abraham, whose faith was imputed to him for righteousness before he was circumcised, 1,—12. He received the promise for himself and his seed, through the righteousness of faith, 13,—22. And we are justified in the same way of believing as he was, 23,—25.

TEXT.

WHAT shall we say then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found;

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God; and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

PARAPHRASE.

IF it be true, as has been observed, (*chap. iii. 27. 28.*) that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, and so there is no room for any one's boasting, or glorying in himself, What shall we think of the case of Abraham, that renowned father of the faithful, from whom we Jews derive our pedigree, and our honour, according to the flesh *? Some of you will say, Had that eminent saint, and servant, and friend of God no cause of glorying in his piety and holiness, which were signified by his being circumcised in the flesh, and which put such a lustre upon his character in the eyes of all men? Can it be denied that such an one, as *he*, might justly take some honour to himself?

2 For if this great and good man, Abraham, found acceptance by, and on account of his remarkably holy works, with the addition of circumcision, he must needs have had a proper occasion for glorying in his high attainments, the cause of his justification being in himself †.—But to any such suggestion, I answer, He in reality was not justified by works before God; and so, notwithstanding all his duties of obedience and external privileges, he had no room to be proud; nor did he glory in the presence, or vaunt himself in the sight of the great and holy God, as though he were worthy of his favour; as plainly appears from what is recorded in the sacred oracles themselves about him.

3 For what doth the scripture say with relation to this very instance? Why, it tells us that this famous Abraham believed in the promises, which God gave him of the Messiah, as his seed, *in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed*; (*Gen. xii. 3.* and

NOTES.

* As pertaining to the flesh, (*κατὰ σαρκά*) may refer either to Abraham's being the father of the Jews according to the flesh; or rather to what advantage he himself had found by being circumcised in the flesh, and appearing remarkably holy before men.

† I take the former part of this verse to continue the words of the objection, to enforce their argument; and what follows in the close of the verse, to be the beginning of the apostle's reply, in confutation of it.

xv. 5, 6.) and that * which he believed concerning the promised seed, was graciously transferred to his account, or made over, or imputed to him, for righteousness, as if he himself had done and suffered, what the Messiah, in whom he believed, was to fulfil in his room and stead.

4 Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

4 Now, to argue a little upon this instance, It is to be observed, that to the person, who performs any works to entitle him to salvation, and obtains it on that account, which was not the case of *Abraham*, the reward of being accepted and finally saved, is, indeed, to such an one, properly accounted, not a point of favour, and a gift of mere grace; but a matter of debt, as what he has a just claim to, on the foot of work, and wages due for it.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

5 But, on the contrary, to the person who, though he makes conscience of every duty, has no opinion of his own ability, or merit; nor goes about to perform, plead, or rest upon any works of obedience, with this view and design, that he may obtain justification by them; but who, on the other hand, under a humble sense of his own utter insufficiency, unworthiness, and ill deserts, gives credit to, and depends upon, the faithful word and free promise of God, who, through

E f f 2

and

N O T E

* It is no uncommon thing in scripture, to put the act for the object, especially with regard to faith and hope. Thus hope signifies the *object of hope*, Jer. xiv. 8. 1 Tim. i. 1. and Heb. vi. 18. And faith is often put for the *object*, or *doctrine of faith*, or that which is believed in; as when it is said, Paul preached the faith which once he destroyed, (Gal. i. 23.) and Felix heard him concerning the faith of Christ; (Acts xiv. 24.) and when the scripture speaks of *keeping, and contending for the faith*, and *holding the mystery of faith*, and the like. And that this is the sense in which we are to understand the apostle, when he says here, and ver. 5. that *Abraham's believing, and his faith*, were counted for righteousness, appears from its being opposed to our works; and from the *rewards being reckoned of grace, and not of debt*. Whereas the act of faith itself, is as much a work, as any other duty commanded in the moral law, and were that to be reckoned to us for righteousness, the reward in justifying us would be a debt due to us, on account of our having performed that work, as a servant's wages is for having done his master's business. And if we compare what is said of Abraham's faith in the follow-

ing parts of this chapter, with Gen. xii. 3. and xv. 5, 6. and xxii. 18. where the object of it is further explained, we shall find that his faith had a reference to Christ, the promised seed, and to what should be done by him, that all nations might be blessed in him: For *Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad*. (John viii. 56.) And what is here called *faith's being imputed, or counted for righteousness*, is in the next chap. (ver. 9, 10, 11, 18, 19.) called, being *justified by Christ's blood*, and *reconciled to God by the death of his Son, by whom we have received the atonement, and the righteousness of Christ's coming upon us unto justification*, and our being made or constituted righteous by his obedience. See also the notes on ver. 24. and chap. i. 16. And that the atoning righteousness of Christ should be accepted for, or imputed to us, through faith in him, is a most natural thought, if we consider that the typical sacrifices were spoken of, as *accepted for, or imputed to, the offerers, to make atonement for them*, or not, according as they were, or were not presented to God, in the way of his appointment. Lev. i. 4. and vii. 18. and xxii. 25.

and on account of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, graciously acquits, and accepts him * that was, and saw himself to be a vile sinner, under a just sentence of condemnation; the object of this man's faith, or that which he sees, and is persuaded of, in the promise, and embraces for his acceptance with God, is reckoned or imputed to him for justification, as if he himself had perfectly fulfilled the law. And this was *Abraham's* case, who had been an ungodly person, or an idolatrous heathen, (*ver. 5*) till God called him by his grace, and freely justified him, through faith in the promised seed.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

6, 7 And all this well agrees with the account which *David*, the man after God's own heart, has given in his description of that man's happiness, to whom God reckons and makes over righteousness for this purpose, without the least consideration of his own good works, as any ingredient in his justification; and without charging upon him his misdeeds, as any bar to it, saying, under a deep sense of the evil of sin, They, and they only, among all the degenerate sons of men, are truly and thoroughly blessed, who, though they are, and must own themselves to be sinners, have found favour with God unto the free forgiveness of all their transgressions †, which are both offences and debts; and whose odious crimes, which the holy God cannot but abhor, are hid from his vindictive eye: So that though their iniquities are, in their own nature, as vile and abominable as ever, yet he blots or strikes them out of their account, (*Psal. li. 9.*) by the blood, and covers them with the righteousness of Christ: He doth not mark them,

N O T E S.

* *The ungodly* here relates, not to what a man continues to be after his justification; but to what he was, and was deemed to be before it: For though sin afterwards remains, it doth not reign in him; and his being justified alters his state and character, as it did *Abraham's*; who was before a *Gentile*, and whom, as *Mr. Locke* observes, the apostle here points to. He is then no longer counted *ungodly*, but *righteous*: Because of the non-imputation of sin, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to him: (*ver. 6, 8.*) For it is not said his faith is his righteousness, but (*λογισται ις δικαιοσυνην*) is so imputed; as to be unto his obtaining a justifying righteousness, (*eb. x. 4, 10.*) though not by his own works, as the context plainly shews.

† In this and the next verse, which are quoted as *David's* words, the apos-

tle mentions only God's pardoning grace, under the notions of his *forgiving sin*, as a debt and an offence; of his *covering* it, as an odious deformity; and of his *not imputing* it, as a law-obligation to punishment. And therefore when the apostle calls this, (*ver. 6.*) *David's* describing the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works, he plainly intimates, that an imputation of righteousness is supposed, or implied, as the ground of forgiveness, or of the non-imputation of sin: For imputing righteousness evidently includes that, though it is more than barely *not imputing sin*. And, unless we take in this thought, the apostle's reasoning seems not very clear from the imputation of righteousness in the case of *Abraham*, to the non-imputation of sin, in *David's* account of blessedness.

so as to enter into judgment with them on that score; (*Psal.* cxxx. 3, 4. and cxliii. 2.) but casts them all behind his back, and as into the depth of the sea, (*Isa.* xxxviii. 17. and *Mic.* vii. 19.) that they may be buried in everlasting oblivion. (*Isa.* xliii. 25. and *Heb.* viii. 12.)

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

8 That man is happy indeed, all blessings are entailed upon him, who, though the guilt of his iniquities has deserved divine wrath, bound him over, and rendered him obnoxious to it, according to the curse of the law; (*Gal.* iii. 10.) yet God will not condemn him for it; the Redeemer's righteousness, instead of his own sin, being placed to his account, by a gracious and judicial act of that God, who alone can forgive and justify. (*Luke* v. 21. and *Rom.* viii. 33.)

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

9 Now the great question is, Whether this blessed privilege of free pardon, and acceptance with God, alone through faith, belongs to the Jews only, who have had the advantage of circumcision; or to the Gentiles also, who never came under that ordinance? For I have already intimated, (*ver.* 3. see the note there) that the object of Abraham's faith, as it terminated upon what the promised Messiah should do, that all nations might be blessed, was set over to him, that he might be deemed and dealt with, as righteous on its account.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

10 Well then, at what time, and in what circumstances, was it thus imputed to him? Was it after, or before he was circumcised? it certainly was not after, but a great while*, at least fourteen years, before; and therefore this favour was not annexed to circumcision; but the uncircumcised Gentiles are as capable of it as the circumcised Jews themselves.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all

11 And Abraham being in this manner justified, upon his first believing; it is plain that his, and his family's being circumcised, many years afterwards, was so far from being the cause, or reason, of his justification, that it was only a sign of the original corruption of human nature, and of the internal circumcision of the heart; as also of the gracious and visible distinction, God had made of him and his seed from

N O T E.

* *Ishmael* was conceived after Abraham had the promise of a seed, and believed in the Lord, who counted it to him for righteousness, as appears from *Gen.* xv. 5, 6. compared with chap. xvi. 4, 11.; and *Ishmael* was thirteen years old when, upon the institution of circumcision, Abraham and he were circumcised, *Gen.* xvii. 25, 26. And its being said, that Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness

of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised, shews that the covenant made with him, *Gen.* xvii. 1.—14. is, for substance at least, the same with that in *Gen.* xii. 2, 3. and xv. 5, 6. For circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had in the promise of the Messiah made to him, and which was counted to him for righteousness, before he was circumcised.

all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

from all other nations, and of his having brought him, together with his offspring, into the bond of the covenant: And it was such a sign, as was also an external, instituted seal *, not only for the confirmation of God's promises to him and his seed, and of their obligations to be the Lord's; but likewise to assure him of his being already a real partaker of that righteousness of faith, which was imputed to him, while he was in the uncircumcised state of *Gentilism*: And this was ordered, in the infinite wisdom of God, to the end that he, as an eminent believer, with whom God's covenant was made expressly for himself and his seed, might be a noble pattern of faith, and of justification in a way of believing; and that he, as the father of the faithful, in whom, and in whose seed, all nations were to be blessed, might be the means of conveying spiritual benefits to all that should afterwards, in imitation of him, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, though they be *Gentiles*, who never were circumcised in the flesh; that the righteousness of Christ might also be made over to them, by gracious imputation through faith, as it was to him, while he remained uncircumcised.

11 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

12 God's end herein also was, that Abraham might be, in like manner, a spiritual father to the *Jews*; not indeed to the whole nation of them, that are only circumcised in the flesh, as his natural posterity; but to such of them, as are likewise his spiritual children, that follow his example in the same kind of faith, for substance, which he was partaker of, while he yet continued an uncircumcised *Gentile*. This clearly shews, for the humbling of the *Jew*, and encouraging of the *Gentile*, that what God did in freely pardoning and justifying Abraham, through faith, was a sample of what he would do, under the gospel-dispensation, in accepting *heathens*, as well as *Jews*, that should believe in Jesus: For they, which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham; and as *Jews* and *Greeks* are all one in Christ Jesus; so they, that be Christ's, are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. iii. 9, 28, 29.)

13 For the promise that he should be the heir of the world,

13 For the great promise which God made to Abraham, that he should be the Lord and chief of the believing world †, inclusive of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, or all

NOTES.

* A seal of the righteousness of faith carries a plain intimation, that the covenant, of which circumcision was the sign and seal, was the covenant of grace: For the righteousness of faith unto justification, which circumcision was the seal of, can belong to no other covenant.

† This verse is apparently brought in as an argument to prove what had been said, in the two foregoing verses, about Abraham's being the father of all them that believe, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, through the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was uncircumcised.

world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

all nations were to be blessed in him, or in Christ, his seed, (Gen. xii. 3. compared with chap. xxii. 18.) and as he, through the promised Messiah, was to be the prime heir and possessor of the blessings of this world and the next, by virtue of the covenant made with him; this promise was not given to Abraham, or to his covenant-seed, by the tenure, either of the law of nature, (see the note on ver. 15.) or of the law of Moses, which was delivered to his offspring four hundred and thirty years afterwards; (Gal. iii. 17.) nor was it given to him, by virtue of his personal obedience to the law, in either of these considerations of it; but it was given to him, and to his spiritual seed, that are dispersed all over the world, and inherit these blessings, through and by virtue of that righteousness, which is received by faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.

14 For if they, that are rewarded according to the law, be heirs of all these blessings, by virtue of their obedience to it, whether it be considered as the law of nature, or as the revealed law given by Moses; then the doctrine of justification alone through faith, to entitle them to these blessings, is set aside, disannulled, or comes to nothing; and the free promise, relating to them, is of no manner of use, and has no effect at all.

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

15 Because, considering the degenerate state of mankind, as it has been described at large in the foregoing discourse, (*chap. i. ii. iii.*) the moral law, even as discernible by the light of nature*, and much more

NOTES.

circumcised; and therefore it seems inconsistent with the nature and design of the apostle's reasoning, to understand Abraham's being heir of the world, literally of his being heir of the land of Canaan: For that was to be the inheritance of only his natural descendants, or of them that were circumcised; so that if the apostle had any reference to the promised land, it could be only as it was a type of heaven. But I take Abraham's being heir of the world, to be a phrase of much the same import with his being the father of all them that believe, whether they be circumcised or not, as he was called, ver. 11.; or with his being the father of many nations, as it is expressed by way of explication, and further proof, ver. 17. And as the heir is the head of the family, and signified in Jewish language, the lord and possessor of its inheritance: So Abraham was the heir of the believing world, that is scattered through all nations, as the promise of spiritual and heavenly blessings, as

well as of a covenant-right to all temporal good things, was made first to him, and transmitted from him to them, according to the covenant made with him; and so they are blessed with him, as his heirs according to the promise. Gal. iii. 8, 9, 29.

* I have considered the law in the two foregoing verses, as including the law of nature; because in this verse, which stands in close connection with them, I cannot think that the law is to be confined to the law merely as given by Moses, though that may be principally intended: For that law was not known to the Gentiles; and yet they certainly were under a law, by which they knew the judgment of God, that they were worthy of death; and they were a law to themselves, as having the work of the law written in their hearts, &c. *chap. i. 32. and ii. 14, 15.* Hence they were transgressors, as they violated the dictates of natural conscience, and were liable to punishment on

more as revealed by *Moses*, pronounces a sentence, and exposes to an execution of wrath upon all that are under it, as a covenant of works; yea, by its strict injunctions, prohibitions, and threatenings, it irritates their natural corruptions to do such things in opposition to it, as deserve wrath, (*chap. vii. 8.*) and thereupon raises terrible expectations of it, as it shews them that they are sinners: (*chap. iii. 20.*) For where there is no law, neither by internal light, nor external revelation, to bind the conscience, there can be no sin, the very notion of which is, that *it is a transgression of the law.* (1 John iii. 4.) And where there is no sanction to enforce it, there can be no entail of wrath, or ground of fearful expectations of it: But this supposes, on the contrary, that where there is a law, with a sanction, every one who breaks it is a sinner; and, as such, is obnoxious to punishment.

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

17 And it is thus ordered, to this very end, that the free promise might be absolutely certain, and infallibly accomplished, to all the truly believing seed of Abraham, without danger of its being defeated by their own unworthiness and defects, as the promise of the first covenant was, by the disobedience of the common head and parent of mankind;

16 Since therefore it is impossible, that any of us should be entitled to spiritual and eternal blessings, by our own obedience to the moral *, any more than to the ceremonial law, God has wisely and mercifully ordered, that they should be bestowed *gratis* upon the heirs of salvation, (*ver. 14.*) merely through faith, that it might be entirely the gift of his own free favour, and all the glory of it might be ascribed to pure, unmixed, and unmerited grace: And it is thus ordered, to this very end, that the free promise might be absolutely certain, and infallibly accomplished, to all the truly believing seed of Abraham, without danger of its being defeated by their own unworthiness and defects, as the promise of the first covenant was, by the disobedience of the common head and parent of mankind;

NOTES.

on that account. *Chap. ii. 12.* Accordingly the word *law* *nomos* is put without the article in this, and the two preceding verses; but the article is prefixed in the following verse, which undoubtedly speaks of the law of Moses; and so we are the more strongly led to this general sense of the word *law* here, if there is any force in Mr. Locke's observation on *chap. iii. 19.* that the word *law*, without the article, signifies law in general, and *with* the article, the law of *Moses*, or at most the whole of the Old Testament; though he has not kept to his own distinction in giving the sense of these verses. (See my note on *chap. iii. 19.*) But whether that distinction may always be relied upon, or not, the nature of the apostle's discourse in this place seems to require a construction,

answerable to it, as *without* the article, *ver. 13, 14, 15.* and *with* it, *ver. 16.* And it is past dispute, with me, that the moral law, in whatever way it is supposed to be made known, is here principally intended; because this is evidently the law, of which sin is the transgression.

* As the foregoing verses shew that the apostle sets aside the works of the moral law from having any concern in our justification; so he here shews, that *faith* itself doth not justify on its own account; for if justification were by *faith, as a work*, or as a principle of love and obedience, then the more faith we have, the less would our justification be of *grace*; because there would then be proportionably the more works, for the sake of which we are justified.

mankind ; and as any other promise would undoubtedly be, through the present weakness, fickleness, and depravity of human nature, were it to depend on our own obedience, as the proper condition of it : But as faith lives upon, receives all from, and ascribes all to, the free and sovereign grace of God ; so grace takes its motives from itself, and not from any thing in its objects, to secure its own design, and carry it through all opposition, difficulty, and danger, that it may be effectual to every true believer ; not only to those that lived under the law of *Moses*, (*τῷ νόμῳ*) but likewise to those, that, though they were not under *that* law, are heirs of *Abraham's* faith, who is the spiritual father of every one of us that believe, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were :

17 This was intimated in what is recorded, (*Gen. xvii. 5.*) concerning God's changing his name from *Abram* to *Abraham* ; because (said he) I have ordained, constituted, and will actually *make thee a father of many nations*. This included his being so, in a spiritual sense, to believing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, in the account of that God in whom he believed, according to the promise, that in *him*, meaning in his seed, *all the families of the earth should be blessed* : (*Gen. xii. 3.* compared with *chap. xxviii. 14.*) He, I say, believed in that God, even the great *Jehovah*, who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins, and will raise the dead bodies of believers to an immortal life, according to the working of his mighty power, whereby he was able to give life to *Gentile* sinners, and to invigorate the bodies of *Abraham* and *Sarah*, when they were in a manner dead, as to the purpose of having children, in the ordinary course of nature ; (*ver. 19.*) and who speaks of things that at present have no existence, and, by natural causes and appearances, are never likely to be at all, as though they already actually were ; as he did, when he promised, that a son should be born of those aged persons ; and that a spiritual seed, should, in due season, be raised to *Abraham*, from among the idolatrous heathens, who were looked upon with contempt, as *things that were not*, (*1 Cor. i. 28.*) and who, at that time, were not the people of God.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations ; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

18 *Abraham*, notwithstanding all the difficulties, discouragements, and high improbabilities that lay in the nature of things, to cut off his hope, believed, with a firm dependence on the infinite wisdom, power, faithfulness, and grace of God, that he would certainly make him the spiritual father of many nations, inclusive of the *Gentiles*, according to his word, wherein he said to him, (*Gen. xv. 5.*) *Look*

towards

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towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou art able to number them; so shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

19 And as all this supposed that he himself should have a son by his wife *Sarah*, from whom a numerous posterity should descend, and from whom the Messiah, in whom all nations were to be blessed, should at length arise; and as God afterwards expressly promised this Son, by the name of *Isaac*, with whom he would establish his covenant, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him: (*Gen. xvii. 19.*) So *Abraham's* faith being not weak and wavering, but raised to a high pitch of steadfastness and assurance on these solid grounds, he was not discouraged by a consideration of the declining state of his own body, which had lost its natural vigour, he being at this time within one, at least, of an hundred years old; nor was he moved to the least diffidence by a consideration of the hopeless condition of *Sarah*, his wife, who had never been with child, and, being ninety years old, (*Gen. xvii. 17.*) was past her teeming age. (*Gen. xviii. 11.*)

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

20 Though these circumstances were a strong bar to all natural expectation of his having a son by her; yet, as God had promised it, he did not at all question, or hesitate about, or dispute in his own mind (*ἢ διακρίθη*). against it, through the power of unbelief, which is apt to raise objections, and to heighten improbabilities into absolute impossibilities: But upon God's making this promise, in the most peremptory and explicit manner to him, he *fell on his face* with adoring reverence, and *laughed*, not with diffidence and contempt, as *Sarah* did, for which she was reprov'd; (*Gen. xviii. 10,—15.*) but in an ecstasy of joy; and *said in his heart*, with believing wonder, *Shall a child be born to him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear?* (*Gen. xvii. 17.*) His faith surmounted all difficulties, arising from natural causes, and was unshaken in its reliance on the promise of God; thereby ascribing all glory to him, as infinitely gracious in making it, and faithful in performing it:

21 And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

21 He also, at the same time, was entirely satisfied in his own mind, yea, abundantly assured with the utmost confidence. (*πληροφροσύνης*) that the Lord, who had made himself known to him, and introduced this promise with a declaration of his being the *Almighty God*, (*Gen. xvii. 1.*) was every way able to surmount all possible obstructions in bringing to pass what he had promised him, that the Saviour might in due season proceed from his loins.

22 And therefore

22 And therefore his faith going out in this manner

fore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

ner unto, and terminating, or resting upon the Messiah, its great object, as set forth in the promise, in which *he saw Christ's day, and was glad*, (John viii. 56.) God graciously placed what he believed in to his account, that the righteousness of the promised seed might be his own, for all the intents and purposes of God's accepting him, as righteous in his sight, and dealing with him according to its worth and merit.

23 Now this, which is recorded as so early spoken of *Abraham*, even under that obscure dispensation, in which he lived, was written, and is transmitted to us, not merely to set out the honour that was put upon him, and to let us know, in an historical manner, that he was justified, or accepted of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of faith; (*ver. 11.*)

24 But God had a much higher and more beneficial design herein: It was principally written for our learning, encouragement, and comfort, and as an example to us, to whom the same righteousness of faith shall be imputed for justification*, as it was to him, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; if, as his faith in the promise of a seed, in whom all nations

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should

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* This application or improvement of all that had been said about *Abraham's* justification, makes it evident to me, that his faith for this purpose, not only rested on the power of God for performing his promise, but likewise looked forward to the promised Messiah, and to what was to be done by him, for the justification both of *Abraham* himself, and of all that should believe in Christ; otherwise I cannot see how this could be an instance and sample of God's way of justifying those that should believe under the gospel-state; or how there could be an analogy between *Abraham's* faith and theirs, with relation to that grand point, which is manifestly supposed in the apostle's method of reasoning about it: For I presume that none, even of those that make the *act* of faith itself our justifying righteousness, will say, that barely believing in the *power* of God for the performance of his promises, without a respect had therein to *Christ*, and to what he has done and suffered, is imputed to any of us, under the gospel-state, for justification; and yet the apostle tells us, in this and the preceding and following verses, that what had been said about *Abraham's* faith being imputed to him for righteousness, was not written for his sake alone; but for

us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up *Jesus* from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. This plainly sets forth Christ in his death and resurrection, as our object of justifying faith: But how can this be the same sort of faith with *Abraham's*, unless *his* also had a respect to Christ, and to what should be done by him, according to the notices he then had of these things? And we may well suppose, that he was led to some notions of them by the first promise of the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head, and by the substitution of sacrifices in the room and stead of offenders, which he could not be wholly a stranger to, and to which he was still further led afterwards by that surprising dispensation, which called him to offer up his only begotten son *Isaac*, but provided the ram in the thicket to be sacrificed in his stead; on which occasion God declared, that in *his seed* all the nations of the earth should be blessed, (Gen. xxii. 1.—18.) And, perhaps, he had all along some more explicit and clearer revelations of these things, than are recorded in the short history we have of him. See also the notes on *ver. 3.* and *chap. i. 16.*

should be blessed, relied on the power of God, who quickens the dead, for a performance of it; (*ver. 17.*) so we likewise believe with all our hearts in the same God, as he has now actually raised our only Lord and Saviour from the dead, that we might be effectually blessed with all spiritual blessings in him.

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

25 Who, that he might *bring in an everlasting righteousness*, (*Dan. ix. 24.*) and so might be a proper, suitable object of our faith, as we are guilty and obnoxious sinners, was in a judicial way and manner *delivered up, according to the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God*, (*Acts ii. 23.*) to the shameful and accursed death of the cross, as our surety, to suffer in our room and stead, for our provoking faults, as the procuring cause of his death, and to make atonement for them, as the final cause of his dying; and who, in testimony of God's having accepted his sacrifice, as a complete satisfaction to his law and justice, was raised again from the dead, and so acquitted and justified, as our public head and representative, to the end that we might be personally discharged from guilt and condemnation, and accepted to eternal life, by the imputation of his righteousness to us, in a way of believing*.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What can we expect from the law, but wrath, in every reflection of our guilty minds, as transgressors of it! But what a safe and glorious way doth the gospel open for justification, through the righteousness of Christ, received by faith! This is the only righteousness, by the imputation of which, any sinner can be accepted of God to eternal life: This alone can secure the glory of his grace, and make sure the heavenly inheritance to all the spiritual seed of *Abraham*: This leaves no room for claiming it as a debt, on account of any thing we can do; or for the least pretence of merit in ourselves, or of glorying before God, whatever our external privileges, or specious appearances before men may be: But it leads us to expect all salvation merely as the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ, and to ascribe the honour of it entirely to him, who justifies them that have been the most ungodly. With what humble confidence may believers rely on the righteousness of Christ for the remission of sins, and justification of life; since he was delivered up to death for their offences, that he might make a complete atonement for them, and was raised again for their justification, through faith in him! How well adjusted to the sinners wants, as well as to the glory of God, is this method of salvation; and what a solid foundation is here for the most unshaken faith, against all the remonstrances of flesh and sense, and against all the obstructions, improbabilities, and discouragements in ourselves, that lie in its way! We may fully depend upon the faithful promise of the Almighty God, who is able to perform it, and who even quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not, as though they were: We need not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief; but may believe in hope against hope; and the more we do so, the greater glory we give to God.—
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N O T E.

* The beginning of the next chapter shews that the apostle had a regard to this way of believing, as that in which we are made partakers of the *justification*, for which Christ *was raised from the dead*: For there, in connection with,

and by way of inference from, what is here said, he adds, *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* (*Chap. v. 1, &c.*)

O the blessedness of pardoned souls! All their sins are freely and fully forgiven and covered, and none of them are charged to their condemnation; but the Redeemer's righteousness is imputed to them for justification, without any consideration of their own works, as contributing towards it. And how wonderful is the grace that extends all these spiritual and eternal blessings to believing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*! Righteousness is as much imputed to them as to *Abraham* himself; and God has given them the ordinance of baptism, instead of circumcision, as a significant sign, and confirming seal of his covenant with them and their seed. But let us ever remember, that *Abraham's* blessing can be no more secured to any of us or ours by baptism, than it was to his natural seed by circumcision. It comes upon us, as it did upon him and them, only through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And how thankful should we be for the holy oracles, since all that they record of *Abraham*, as well as of others, is for our sakes, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope! As he was made the father of many nations; so righteousness shall as certainly be imputed to every one of us who believe, as it was to him, that we, as his spiritual seed, may inherit the blessing with him.

C H A P. V.

The apostle having proved at large, from the state of things before, and under the law, (chap. ii. and iii.) and even before God made his covenant with *Abraham*, (chap. iv.) that the justification of *Jews* and *Gentiles* is merely by grace, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, proceeds to set forth its happy fruits and effects in both, 1,—11. And then carries his argument back as far as the fall of *Adam* itself, which involved all mankind in sin and death, and rendered every one alike incapable of being justified in any other way, than through Jesus Christ, 12,—14. And thereupon runs the parallel between the first and the second covenant-head, but shews that the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, is more efficacious to bring justification and salvation to all his spiritual seed, than *Adam's* sin had been to entail final condemnation and misery upon all his natural seed, 15,—21.

TEXT.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

PARAPHRASE.

WHETHER therefore we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, yet being, in the manner before described, (chap. iii. and iv.) brought into a state of justification, not for, but by means of faith in Christ, the dreadful breach is made up, which sin had opened between God and us; we are received into favour, and brought into a state of friendship with him, like *Abraham* himself; and have a peaceful serenity of soul toward God, (*ἡσυχία τοῦ Θεοῦ*) through the atoning death and sufferings, which have been followed with the most signal and open discharge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as our public head and surety, in whom we have a peculiar interest, that all the virtue of his death and resurrection, (chap. iv. 25.) may extend to us.

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein

2 By and through whom, as our only Mediator and Peace-maker, all of us, who believe, have also had, under the conduct of the Spirit, a free introduction,

wherein we stand, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope;

duction, (*προσχωμεν εν χριστη*) and admission by faith into this excellent state of grace, and of full acceptance with God, in which we stand on a sure foundation, as acquitted persons, with honour and safety, with humble confidence, holy fortitude, and everlasting continuance: And, under a sense of this our happiness and security in Christ, we have matter of glorying, incomparably better than that of *Jews boasting in circumcision and the law**; and do exceedingly rejoyce and triumph, in an assured hope of enjoying that blessedness and glory which God himself is possessed of, has provided, and will bring us to, and in which he is exalted in the brightest displays of his own adorable perfections, counsels, and operations, and will put an inconceivable glory upon us.

3 And we not only rejoyce with exceeding joy, in view and prospect of the immortal honours that we shall be hereafter advanced unto; but we at present triumph, even amidst all the afflictions of every kind, and all the persecutions and reproaches for the sake of Christ, that can befall us in this life; and we count them our glory, as being well satisfied from the word of God, the testimony of his spirit, and our own observation, that these pressing trials of our faith, how disagreeable soever they be to flesh and sense, and how apt soever in their own nature to raise murmurings and impatience in carnal hearts, are wisely ordered, over-ruled, and blessed of God, to beget, improve, and confirm a calm submission to his will, a humble silence in bearing whatever he sees fit to lay upon us, and a possession of our own souls in peace, without fretting or repining at his hand, or angry resentments against the instruments of our troubles.

4 And we find that patience, having its perfect work, operates unto, and brings in, a rich treasure of experimental acquaintance with the truth of our faith, and the uprightness of our own hearts, under all our trials; with the emptiness and vanity of this world; with the superior excellency of heavenly things; with God's wisdom, power, faithfulness, and care over us; and with the seasonable assistance of his grace to sanctify all dispensations to us, to support

N O T E.

* *We rejoyce* (*καυχουμεθα*) is the same word that is rendered, ver. 3. *we glory*, and ver. 11. *we joy*; and it is the same word that was used to express the *Jews boasting, or glorying in circumcision and in the law*, chap. ii. 23. iii. 27. and iv. 2.; and so it is here used in opposition to all that sort of glorying, to shew

that the only true ground of glorying lies, not in external privileges and legal performances, but in the blessings of the gospel, which the grace of God has brought in, through Jesus Christ, to every one that believes, whether he be Jew or Gentile.

port and comfort us under them, to carry us through them, and to make them all work together for our good; that we may be approved of God, weaned from this world, and raised in our affections to things above, and may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and conducted safe, through many tribulations, to his heavenly kingdom: And all this happy experience still more and more encourages and confirms us in that hope of the glory of God, in which, as I said before, (*ver. 2.*) we greatly rejoice and triumph.

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

5 And we are thoroughly satisfied, that this sort of hope is well grounded; that it may be cheerfully acquiesced in, and boldly avowed, without fear or shame, how much soever we may suffer from men for it; and that it will neither now, nor ever hereafter, turn to our confusion by its being disappointed; because it rests, not upon any merit in ourselves, but upon the free favour of God towards us, which, in its gracious and effectual operations, (*ἐκκυσταί*) is poured forth into, and abundantly fills our souls with its lovely manifestations and distinguishing fruits; and so enflames them with love to him again, by the special influence and agency of the Holy Spirit, whom God of his own good pleasure has given to dwell in our hearts, as a counsellor, comforter, and sanctifier, and who, as such, bears witness with our spirits, that, notwithstanding all our own unworthiness and provocations, and all the troubles we endure, God himself loves us.

6 For, when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

6 For, to expatiate a little upon this delightful theme, though, as has been shewn at large, with reference first to the *Gentiles*, (*chap. i. 18,—32.*) and then to the *Jews*, (*chap. ii. and iii. 1,—19.*) we were all sunk into the deepest abyss of sin, as well as misery: Yet even while we were in this deplorable condition, through the fall *, utterly insufficient to help or recover ourselves, and unable to resist or appease God's wrath, which we lay exposed to, or to do any thing acceptable to him: Yea, while we were not only impotent, but impious and profane, in our unmindfulness and contempt of God and religion, and of his government and glory; even then Christ, in the

N O T E.

* Dr. Whitby shews, by several instances, that the word (*ἀσθενία*) in the seventy, here rendered *without strength*, answers to the Hebrew word (*לחול*) which signifies to fall and stumble to our ruin. And though the word does not always carry this sense, yet it seems highly probable that the apostle here

included this thought; since he mentions being *without strength*, as the common case of all mankind, whom he immediately after, in this and the eighth verse, calls *ungodly and sinners*; and since he was going to discourse at large on the fall of man, *ver. 12, &c.*

the fulness of time, according to God's eternal appointment, and frequent predictions, types, and promises; and at the most seasonable time, which the Divine Wisdom had fixed upon, when things were come to their worst among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and when our own need was greatest, and the glory of God's grace would be most of all displayed, with evidence and endearment, in raising up a Saviour: In this best and properest time of all others, the Lord Jesus Christ freely died in the room and stead of such impotent, contemptible, and ungodly creatures as we are. Astonishing instance of matchless love and grace, infinitely surpassing all that can be found in the most affectionate lovers that ever appeared among mankind!

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

7 For, were we to search all the world over, we should hardly meet with a single person, who would be willing to sacrifice his own life for the redemption of a harmless inoffensive man, or even of a man of integrity, faithfulness and honesty, that had been unjustly condemned to death: Yet it is possible, though doubtful, that here and there might be found one, who would have courage, gratitude, and friendship enough, in such circumstances, to deliver up himself to death in the room and stead of a public spirited man, and a generous, compassionate, bountiful benefactor, that had been, and might still continue to be, an uncommon blessing to himself, family, friends, and country. And with what admiration and applause would such a brave, heroic, and benevolent act be every where thought and talked of!

8 But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

8 But the great and blessed God has displayed the glory and endearments of his love to us in a most surpassing manner, infinitely transcendent to all this: He has set it off with the utmost advantage, to raise our faith and hope, admiration, love, and joy, and to make it out-shine all other instances whatsoever; in as much as, though we were so far from being either righteous or good, upright in ourselves, or profitable to God or man, that we were, by nature and practice, highly injurious to God and one another, and criminals that deserved to die, and were justly sentenced to death, and in whose destruction God could have glorified himself; yet even then, under this consideration of us, the eternal Father, in the greatness of his love, readily sent his only begotten and dearly beloved Son; and the eternal Son freely came into our nature and world, and into our law-place, to undergo the worst of deaths, as a ransom for us, that we might live for ever.

9 Much more then, being now justified

9 Since therefore this free and abiding love of the unchangeable God has done such wonderful things

justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

for us, while we were in so hateful a condition under the power and guilt of sin; much more may we now depend upon it, with the most assured hope, that being already forgiven all trespasses, and entitled to eternal life, through faith in the blood of Christ, we shall certainly, for his sake, and on his account, be delivered from all vindictive resentments or punishment for sin, and from the wrath to come.

10 For if while we were, not only *without strength, sinners and ungodly*, (ver. 6, 8.) but were likewise in a state of war with the great God; so that we, on one hand, were *alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works*, (Col. i. 25.) had revolted from him, and turned rebels and traitors against him; and hereupon the holy God, on the other hand, declared his wrath against us, in his law, in our own consciences, and in his righteous judgments. If in these obnoxious and detestable circumstances, he, in the exceeding greatness of his compassionate love, provided a ransom for us, to satisfy his justice, and appease his wrath*, that he might be at peace with us, and act the part of a reconciled friend towards us, through the meritorious death of his only begotten Son; much more may we be humbly confident, upon the surest principles of reasoning, that being actually brought into a state of peace, and high friendship with God, through faith in the blood of Jesus, we shall be effectually delivered from all the miseries we were plunged into, or in danger of, by sin, and be advanced to complete salvation with eternal glory, by our risen and exalted Saviour, who ever lives to apply the virtue of his death, and to *make intercession for us*. (Chap. viii. 34.)

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our

11 And we not only rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and in the advantages that result, even from our trials and afflictions†; but, upon the solid grounds but

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* *Reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, in the former part of this verse, seems to relate to Christ's having worked out our reconciliation, or completed all, in a way of merit by his death, that was necessary to appease the wrath of God, and make way for the riches of his grace to be communicated to us, in full consistency with the honour of all his perfections, and of his law and government, which the apostle had called, ver. 6. and 8. *Christ's dying for the ungodly*, and *dying for us*: But *being reconciled*, in the last clause of the verse, seems to relate to the reconciliation's taking effect upon us; or to our being brought into a

state of actual reconciliation and peace with God, and justification in his sight, through faith in Christ's blood, which the apostle had spoken of, ver. 1, 9. and which in the verse after this (ver. 11.) he calls our *receiving the atonement*.

† *Not only so*, manifestly refers back to ver. 2, 3. where the apostle had said, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also*, &c. And here, having in the intermediate verses shewn, how even their afflictions and trials furnished them with occasions of glorying, he reassumes, and carries on his thought in a beautiful gradation to a further instance of their

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

but now mentioned, we rejoice with the highest satisfaction and delight in God himself, as our own God, and our chief good and glory : We rejoice in our covenant-relation to, and assured interest in him, through our only Mediator, Lord, and Saviour, who loved us, and gave himself for us ; and by faith in whom, we have now, under gospel-discoveries, approved of, accepted, rested upon, and taken comfort in, the great and only proper reconciliation, (*την καταλλαξιν*) which was typified by the legal sacrifices, and which he has made for us by his death, (*ver. 10.*) that we, *Gentile* as well as *Jewish* believers, may be freed from condemnation on its account, and may be dealt with in this world, and for ever, according to its infinite worth and merit.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

12 Since therefore, under the gospel-state, *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, are in fact reconciled by the death of Christ, and have received the atonement by faith in him ; (*ver. 10, 11.*) and since, as has been shewn at large, persons of all nations were on a level, even under the law, and before it, yea, before the covenant made with *Abraham*, as to their guiltiness before God, and their need of the gospel-way of justification by his grace through Jesus Christ ; let us now, in further proof of this important point, go back as far as the original apostacy, in which the *Jews* were, *without doubt*, equally involved with the *Gentiles* : For as by the first man *Adam*, who was the father of us all, and with whom the covenant was made in innocency for himself and his posterity, *sin*, that worst of evils *, even the first sin committed by him, broke in upon, and was propagated from him, to all the human inhabitants of this world, and became the source of all the iniquity that has ever since been found among mankind ; and as a sentence, together with the beginning of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal †, inclusive of all the miseries of this life,

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their glorying in God himself, as their reconciled God, and as the sum of all their happiness, through Jesus Christ.

* It is not said that *sin*, but *sin*, with an emphasis in the singular number, (*ἡ αὐγία*) entered into the world, to intimate that it was not any after-acts of *Adam's* sinning, but his first sin, while he stood in his public capacity, that invaded all his offspring : And as this is said to be the sin of one *man*, though the *serpent* and *Eve* sinned before him, it shews that he was the covenant-head of all mankind, and that therefore *his* sin, and not theirs, is charged upon them ;

and for the same reason, as soon as *Adam's* sin had entered, then, and not before, the sentence of death was pronounced, and that not upon the *serpent*, or *Eve*, but only upon the *man*, to whom it was said, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Gen. iii. 19.

† The death which the apostle says, passed upon all men, by one man's sin, is manifestly the same with that which the *one man* himself was exposed to by his sin, according to God's threatening, that in the day he should eat of the forbidden fruit he should surely die. (Gen. ii. 17.) And what was the death there-

life, and of that which is to come, made its way into the world by his first sin; and so death, in all its hideous forms, passed to the whole human race through him, in whom they all sinned, as in their public

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is threatened? but a deprivation of the holy and happy life of soul and body, in the image and favour of God, and in communion with him, which he enjoyed, and should otherwise have been confirmed in with rich advantage for ever: Accordingly upon Adam's sin, he was liable, not only to diseases and death of the body, but also to inward dread and horror of soul, under a sense of divine wrath, as appeared in his being afraid, and seeking to hide himself from the presence of the Lord; which Eve, his wife, also did, (*Gen. iii. 8, 10.*) he being a covenant-head and representative to her, as well as to the posterity that should proceed from them both: And it is observable, that though her sin was before his; yet he had no horrors of conscience for it, till after he had sinned; and so entailed the covenant curse, which God had threatened to inflict, in case he should eat of the forbidden fruit, *Gen. ii. 17.*; and this threatening was formally delivered only to Adam, before Eve was brought forth, she being then as much naturally and federally in him, as his offspring were. And as the death of the body by no means infers an extinction of the soul, and divine revelation assures us, that the soul survives the body; it seems necessarily to follow from thence, that this death extends, not merely to a separation of soul and body, but likewise to all the uneasiness and distress that flow from the disorderly, ungovernable, and unsatisfied principles, inclinations, and appetites, that were introduced by sin; from the loss of the image and favour of God, and of communion with him; and from a sense of guilt, and of divine displeasure on that account, with dismal despair of being ever recovered to a state of happiness again: Nor could such recovery have been expected, to prevent this death's being eternal, unless God himself, in the abundance of his own mercy were to find out a way of relief; which, blessed be his name, he has done by our Lord Jesus Christ, who was not legally an Adam, as a covenant-head, because Adam ceased to be so immediately upon his first sin, and Christ was not promised till after the fall, nor did descend from him in the ordinary way of generation.

And the reason why death, in these its most dreadful forms, as well as the miseries and mortality of the present life, was not expressed in the sentence passed upon Adam soon after the fall, (*Gen. iii. 17.—19.*) seems to be; because, just before God pronounced that sentence, he had graciously promised, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; (*Gen. iii. 15.*) and thereby intimated that this worst part of the threatened death should not be executed upon those who should believe in the promised Saviour; but that he should take it away from them, by his own sufferings and death in their room and stead. Accordingly our apostle having pleaded for the justification of believing Gentiles, as well as Jews, by the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, from a consideration of the state of things under the law, (*chap. iii.*) and even before the Abrahamic covenant, (*chap. iv.*) he here carries his argument back to the common condition of both these sorts of people, which included all mankind, ever since the fall of Adam, and in which every one of the human race were alike involved: And he slides into this part of his design in a way of inference from what he had said, in the immediately preceding verses, about reconciliation and atonement as already made by Christ, and received by them that believe, that they might be saved from wrath through him. All this, together with the whole strain of the apostle's subsequent reasoning on this head, is to me a strong proof, that the death here spoken of, as coming upon the whole world of mankind, by the sin of the first man, is not to be confined, as some would fain have it, to temporal afflictions and mortality of the body: For this notion of death falls vastly short, not only of what Adam himself may well be supposed to have understood, and was subjected to, by the original threatening, (*Gen. ii. 17.* compared with *chap. iii. 8, 10.*) but likewise of the manifest design of the apostle's argument, all along in this epistle, relating to the guilty state of the Jews and Gentiles, which made a better righteousness than their own, necessary for their justification to eternal life. For in the former part of the epistle, he had been

the head and representative *, in whose loins they likewise were; insomuch that they, on this account, are, by legal estimation, deemed sinners in him, his offence

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been insisting on a state of sin, in which the whole world is become guilty before God, (chap. iii. 19.) and which exposed them to miseries beyond a temporal death, telling us that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; (chap. i. 18.) that impenitent sinners treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; (chap. ii. 5.) and that as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, (ver. 12, 16.) which relates to what is consequent to temporal death, even to the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, that God will render to them who obey not the truth, in opposition to the eternal life which he will give to others. (ver. 7.—10.) Accordingly the blessings spoken of, as brought in by Christ, for persons that were in these guilty and miserable circumstances, are redemption, forgiveness of sins, and justification through the righteousness of God; (chap. iii. 22.—25.) peace and reconciliation with God by the death of his Son, and salvation through him: (chap. v. 1.—10.) And all along in the latter part of this chapter, the apostle opposes righteousness, justification, and life, as brought in by Christ to all his spiritual seed, to sin, condemnation, and death, as brought in by Adam, to all his natural offspring; and speaks of the same sort of death that came upon Adam himself, which, as has been shewn, was more than bare mortality; and it is opposed to that eternal life to which grace reigns through righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (ver. 21.) And then, in the following parts of this epistle, he goes on to speak of death under such a notion as carries our thoughts beyond a mere privation of this mortal life; as particularly when he says, (chap. viii. 6, 13.) *To be carnally minded is death; and if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* Surely by these passages he meant more than that to be carnally minded issues in temporal death, as its punishment; and that if we live after the flesh, we shall die corporally; for

this must be our case, whether we be carnally minded, and live after the flesh, or not. But, in opposition to the death there mentioned, he speaks of a life, that consists in, and results from our being spiritually minded, which cannot but relate to a spiritual and eternal life.

Now, taking things in this light, according to the plain and most natural sense of the apostle's expressions, his way of reasoning is exceeding clear and strong; and all his discourse, in this and the former, as well as latter part of the epistle, is nervous and closely connected, beautiful and harmonious, to shew what need every one of the human race, Jews and Gentiles, have of being justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and by faith in him. But how flat and weak, inconclusive, incoherent, and unsuitable to his own principal view, must we make the apostle's argument, in this part of it! if we suppose that, when he carries it back to the common state of mankind, by reason of Adam's sin, he entirely drops the thought of wrath and misery relating to another world, to which they were exposed, as he had been representing it all along before, under the law, and prior to the covenant made with Abraham; and that he now only considers them, as subjected to temporal afflictions and death, under, and by means of the fall; as if their being obnoxious to these, were all the calamity that they were exposed to by it; and their justification by Jesus Christ, through faith in him, were only necessary, in the present view of the argument, on account of their being brought into a state of affliction and mortality, by the sin of their first parent, and that though believers themselves are still as liable to this sort of death as any other men.

* Adam's posterity being in his loins, and his sin being imputed to them, may be illustrated by Levi's being in Abraham's loins; (Heb. vii. 9, 10.) and by the law of nations, which so far imputes the treason of a rebellious nobleman to his children, as to bring an attainder upon their blood, and a forfeiture of the inheritance, privilege, and honours, which would otherwise have descended to them.

sence being imputed to, and punished in them. Now, as this is the case of one and all in *Adam*, and shews that the *Jew* is as much under guilt, and has as much need of the gospel-salvation as the *Gentile*; so, as we shall see anon, (*ver.* 18, 19.) * spiritual benefits, opposite to all this ruin by the first man, are brought in by Jesus Christ, as a public head of recovery to one, as well as another, of these sorts of people, through faith in him.

13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

13 And that the death and miseries, which are brought upon all mankind, came in by *Adam's* sin, is evident: For sin †, with the penalty of calamities and death annexed to it, was always in the world, even

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them. And as the words (*19^o*) here used, and rendered *for that*, are well known to signify *in whom*; and this sense is favoured by the preceding verb, (*ἵνα*) which speaks of a thing already done before we were born, and signifies *passed through*, and so intimates that death had passed through *Adam* (*ὡς ἡ ἁρτία ἀνθρώπων*) to all men; and as it is expressly said, 1 Cor. xv. 22. that (*ὡς ὡς Ἀδάμ*) in *Adam* all die; and this best agrees with the notion of his being a public head, which he is evidently represented to be throughout this discourse, I have therefore given that sense of these words; and yet not to the exclusion of the other, which our translation suggests, by rendering them *for that, or in so much that* they, by construction of law, are accounted to have sinned in him. But which ever way they are rendered, it is obvious that *all have sinned*, is mentioned as the reason of death; *having passed upon all men*; and in the former part of the verse, and all along in the following context, *sin* and *death* are plainly distinguished, one from the other, as *cause* and *effect*: It is therefore surprising that any should understand *all have sinned* in this verse, to signify, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect, all are so far sufferers, as to become mortal and subject to death: For if this were supposed to be the sense of these terms in ever so many other places, it seems impossible that it should be so in *this*, where sin is so expressly mentioned in distinction from, and as the *reason* or procuring cause of this effect.

* The *redemption*, or second part of the comparison between *Adam* and Christ, is put off, by a parenthesis, to *ver.* 18, 19. But, to relieve the mind, and prevent losing sight of it, till we get through the intermediate verses, I have

suggested the thought here, which will be more enlarged upon there, and seems to be summarily included in *ver.* 14. where *Adam* is spoken of, in his public representative capacity, as the *figure of him that was to come*.

† By *sin's being in the world*, seems to be meant (as Mr. *Locke* observes) not merely that sin existed, but that it also had an entail of death upon it, as its proper punishment by virtue of some law, before the law of *Moses* was given to *Israel*, with an express declaration, that this should be its wages: For, in the preceding verse, the apostle had spoke of *sin's entering into the world, and death by sin*; and here he tells us that *sin is not imputed*, or charged in such a manner, as to subject any one to a penalty for it, *where there is no law* to bind the transgressor over to such penalty; and in the next verse (see the note there) he speaks of the death of *infants*, as not to be accounted for, but upon the foot of their being under the sanction of some law that required it. But what law could this be, unless that which was given to *Adam*? Since there was no other law before *Moses's* time, that expressly made death the punishment of transgressing it, except that against *murder* after the flood, (*Gen.* ix. 6.) which infants could not transgress, and which, comparatively speaking, was executed but upon very few of mankind. And what *sin* can the apostle mean, when he says it *was in the world before the law*, but that *original sin*, which came upon, or was imputed to, all mankind? Since this is the sin, which, as he had said in the foregoing verse, *entered into the world*; and since, in the next verse, he speaks of infants suffering the sad effects of this sin, though they were never guilty of personal transgression of any law whatsoever.

ven original sin, ever since the fall of man, before there was any such thing as that revelation of the law which was given by *Moses*: But this supposes that there was some law in being, which sin was the transgression of, and by virtue of which, sin was so universally charged upon all mankind, as to subject them to the sentence and penalty of death; otherwise there would, strictly speaking, have been no sin at all, much less any room for such imputation and punishment of it. (*Chap. iv. 15.*)

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to *Moses*, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

14 Nevertheless it is certain that, for about two thousand five hundred years, which intervened between Adam's fall and the delivery of the law by *Moses*, death, with all its dreadful and unknown attendants, exercised a terrible and universal dominion, not only over grown persons, that sinned actually, as Adam did, but even over infants themselves; witness those of the old world, that perished in the deluge; and those that were cut off in the tremendous destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, as well as all the little children that were sick, convulsed, and tortured, and then died, in every generation, though none of them could have committed any actual sin * to deserve such

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as the descendents of a fallen head, were sentenced, together with their representative, to the same sort of death with him; and I cannot account for the deplorable agonies and early deaths of such an innumerable multitude of them, upon any other foundation, than that of their being under a law-charge of their representative's sin. But how far the righteousness of the second Adam may extend to them that die in infancy, to prevent an execution of the curse in the future miseries of another world, is not for us to determine; we may quietly leave them in the hands of a merciful God, who we are sure can do them no wrong: And believing parents may with great satisfaction hope well concerning the eternal happiness of their dying infants; since they never lived to cast off God's gracious covenant, into which he has taken believers and their seed, under that better head in whom all nations are blessed. But then it should be remembered that infants needing Christ's redemption, supposes them to have been under a charge of guilt, otherwise there would have been no occasion for any redemption of them; and if they have not the benefit of redemption in the other world, they have none at all, since they are afflicted and die in this

such punishment, as *Adam* had done; who, in his public capacity, was, by the ordination of God, an eminent type, (*τοῦ*) pattern, and figurative representation of something, that was to bear a correspondence to him, in Jesus Christ, who, in due time, was to descend from his loins in an extraordinary manner, and who *, like the first *Adam*, was to come into the world, as a covenant-head and representative, for conveying life and righteousness.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

15 But though *Adam*, in his public character, was such a remarkable type of Christ; yet we are not to suppose, that there is no difference in the parallel between them; or that the benefit, which comes to *Jew* and *Gentile*, as the gratuitous undeserved gift of divine grace, through the righteousness of Christ, is no more than what barely answers to the mischievous effects, that were deserved by, and inflicted for, the high provocation, which the first man was guilty of: It indeed doth this; but this is not all; it is still more abundantly efficacious: For, as to the *causes* of the different effects produced by them severally, if it be true, as has been shewn, that through the fall (*παρὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*) of one who was merely a man, a sentence of death has passed, and dreadful destruction is, by the righteous dispensation of God, brought upon the whole multitude of his natural posterity, as the wages of his sin; much more may we conclude, from a consideration of God's superior delight in mercy, and of the incomparably greater excellence and dignity of the second federal head, who is *the Lord from heaven*, (1 Cor. xv. 47.) and so is God as well as man, that the exceeding riches of divine love and favour toward the lost and ruined race †, and the free gift of

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of opposite blessings, which proceed entirely from God's own mere grace, through this second glorious man, even Jesus Christ, has *exceeded* in its abundant virtue and power towards all his spiritual seed, and in giving them greater happiness than they lost by the fall, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, whose nature he assumed, that he might be a head of recovery to them, and who are, absolutely speaking, *a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.* (Rev. vii. 9.)

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, *so is the gift*: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

16 And, as to the *extent of the effects* of these two heads, though not with respect to the number of persons that come under them, yet with respect to *efficacious influence*, there is this further happy difference, which redounds to the honour of the second head, that the free gift of God's grace, through Jesus Christ, is not barely a remedy answerable to the mischief of the first *Adam's* sin: No, it is much more than this: For the guilt and judicial sentence that passed upon all mankind to their condemnation*,

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the nature of the subject and argument; (see the notes on *John* i. 7, 29, and *2 Cor.* v. 17.) So they cannot be taken in the same extent, when they are applied in these verses to the *all*, and the *many* of the first and second *Adam*. For who can pronounce it, as true in fact, that *the free gift comes* upon every individual of mankind *unto justification of life*, as in ver. 18. or that they all, without exception, whether infidels, atheists; and such as never heard of Christ, or the most notoriously infamous, and finally impenitent sinners, are, or shall be made or constituted *righteous*, as in ver. 19.

* *Condemnation* (*κατακριμα*) is the same word that is used for *law-condemnation to eternal death*, *Rom.* viii. 1.; which is the only place besides, where it is found in all the New Testament. And as (*απειμα*) *the judgment* properly signifies not an act of mere sovereignty, nor the natural consequence of sin, but a legal sentence on its account; this supposes a law-charge of guilt, and such a concern in the sin, as makes it, in a moral sense, some way ours; otherwise I cannot see how the penal sentence could be judicially and righteously pronounced and executed in any part of it, upon all *Adam's* seed; and therefore I have taken into the construction the idea of guilt, as well as of a law-sentence: And as judgment by one (*εξ* 1905) here,

and (*δια* 1906) in the next verse, may signify by one sin, as well as by one man, I have included both these senses; especially since one sin of *Adam* is all along spoken of in the singular number, as the original cause of all the miseries that came upon his posterity: And the plain reason of this is, because the covenant being broken by his first sin, he thereupon ceased to be a public head; and so his *after-sins* were not imputed to his offspring, any more than the sins of their immediate parents. Though some are apt to think too lightly, and even make a jest of this sin of *Adam*, and to cavil at the judicial entail of death and condemnation upon his posterity *only for his eating an apple*, as they affect ludicrously to express it: Yet it was really a high aggravation, instead of an abatement of his guilt, that for so small a thing as eating an apple, which he had no occasion for, and might easily have abstained from, he would abuse the noble liberty, and moral, as well as natural powers, God had given him; would be dissatisfied with his present holy and happy state; would give credit to the devil rather than to God, and so aspire after an independency on him; would voluntary rebel against, and ungratefully fly in the face of the sovereignty and authority, wisdom and goodness of his Maker, who, he clearly knew, had himself immediately and expressly forbid his eating

was on account of one sin, which he committed, who, though a single person, represented all his posterity: But the free gift of God's grace, through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, is effectual, not only for the remission of that one sin, but also of innumerable other personal transgressions, whereby fallen men have still more and more revolted from God, and highly offended him; it is effectual unto their complete discharge from all their actual, as well as original guilt, and unto their entire freedom from all condemnation, and full acceptance with God, as righteous, through faith in this great Head and Redeemer.

17 For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they, which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

17 And this shews the *different nature* of the effects and consequences of the acts of these two public heads, which gives us the most advantageous view of Christ, and of the grace of God in him: For if by the provoking fall (*το παραπτώματι*) of one man, the common father and head of the whole human race, death, with all its terrible attendants and consequences, in this legal manner, invaded, subdued, and exercised dominion over them, by the malignant influence which is derived to them from that one man, and from his first sin; much more may we be satisfied, from God's rejoicing to exercise loving-kindness in the earth, that all those, who by faith embrace, close with, and are made partakers of the rich abundance of his favour and love through Jesus Christ; and who, sensible of their own unworthiness, accept the free gift of his perfect, everlasting, and infinitely meritorious righteousness, unto justification of life, (*ver. 18. see the note on chap. i. 17.*) together with all the overflowing and superabundant blessings that are purchased by it; much more, I say, may we be assured, that all these shall have a sacred freedom from the guilt and tyranny of sin, and a noble dominion over it, in a spiritual life of grace here; and shall triumph over death and all its terrors, together with every other enemy, in an everlasting life of blessedness and glory hereafter; and this they shall do by one, who alone is the second covenant-head, even Jesus Christ, the Saviour of lost sinners.

18 Therefore, as by

18 Therefore *, to return to what has been already

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eating of this fruit, and of this only, under the severest penalties, as the easiest test of his obedience that can be imagined. But it would carry me beyond the nature of my present work to go into a particular detail of the great heinousness and numerous aggravations of this complicated up; for which see sermon x. on *faith and practice*, at *Berry-street*.

* The apostle having said, *ver. 12. by way of inference from his foregoing discourse, Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:* And having in the five following verses proved this point, and represented *Adam* as a type of Christ in his public capacity, and shewn

by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

dy suggested about the entrance of sin into the world, (ver. 12.) and Adam's being the figure of him that was to come, (ver. 14.) as by the fall (*δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου*) of one man, Adam, whereby the great and holy God was highly offended, sin broke in upon the whole human race, to bring them under a sentence of law-condemnation*, which exposed them to all the miseries included in the term *death*, and made them *children of wrath, by nature*, one as well as another, (Eph. ii. 3. in as much as in Adam all died; 1 Cor. xv. 22.) even so, just in the same manner of conveyance from a public head, by the infinitely perfect and worthy obedience and sufferings of one, namely Jesus Christ, which together make up the complete righteousness, that is demanded by the broken law, in order to the justification of a sinner, the free gift of God's grace, in making over this righteousness, with all the blessings procured by it, effectually extends to all Christ's spiritual seed, in and through him, (see the note on ver. 15.) even to all men, of what nation soever, that by faith receive the abundant grace, and the gift of righteousness before mentioned, (ver. 17.) unto their entire discharge from guilt and condemnation, and their full acceptance with God to eternal life: And so both these dispensations stand on a legal foot, which places the acts, as well as sufferings, of representatives to those, that were one in law with them.

19 For as by one man's

19 For † as, on one hand, by the imputation of one

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shewn how far the benefit of the *second* covenant-head exceeds, or stretches beyond the sad effects of the *first*: He, in this verse, resumes the first branch of the comparison, which was there laid down; and adds the other branch of it, to shew the similitude there is between these two heads, with respect to the manner of conveying their different effects; and so goes on to complete the argument which he had left imperfect before. See the third note on verse 12.

* The words *judgment came*, are not in the original, as the *English* reader may see by their being put in different characters. And considering that the apostle here resumes the argument, begun at ver. 12. it seems to me, that what is lacking in this part of the sentence, might be more justly and properly filled up, by supplying from that verse, *Sin entered*, (*ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰσῆλθεν*) than by taking the supplement, *judgment came*, from ver. 16. For the 16th verse stands in the parenthesis which lies between the parts of

the main argument, and only *judgment*; (*κρίμα*) and not *judgment came*, is to be found even there. But the *free gift*, in the latter part of this 18th verse, may more naturally be supplied from ver. 16. because what the apostle had there been saying, about the benefit brought in by Christ, gave a fit occasion for his returning to this second member of the comparison between the two public heads.

† The apostle's introducing this verse with the causal particle *for*, shews that he is here proving what he had said in the foregoing verse; which he doth by setting before us the legal ground of that condemnation which is the effect of the first Adam's sin, and of that justification, which is the effect of the righteousness of Christ; that this lies in the imputation of one's sin, and of the other's righteousness, to all that are included in each of those covenant-heads or representatives respectively. But to make the expressions in both these verses of one and the same signification, as they do,

man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

one man's act of aggravated disobedience to God's command, in eating the forbidden fruit, vast multitudes, even all his natural descendants, were subjected to a law-charge of guilt, and so (*αμαρτωλοι κατασκευασθαι*) were judicially constituted sinners, and condemned as such, and thereby brought under the punishment of a depraved nature, destitute of righteousness, and prone to all sin; they being involved with their covenant-head and representative in his crime*: So, on the contrary, by the imputation of the perfect and glorious active†, as well as passive obedience, of one eminent single person, to God and his law, namely of Christ alone, shall great multitudes, even all his spiritual seed, be judicially constituted righteous, (*δικαιοι κατασκευασθαι*) and be justified as such, through faith in him, (chap. iii. 22.) and shall be brought under a holy influence to sanctify their nature, in virtue of his righteousness imputed to them;

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they

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do, who by *made sinners*, here, understand subjected to death by the sentence of God, and by judgment to condemnation, ver. 16. understand the sentence of condemnation, is to expose the apostle's reasoning to the utmost contempt; as if he would prove *idem per idem*, the same thing by itself, or by only repeating the very same idea in other words.

* *Made sinners* and *made righteous*, most immediately relate to the condemnation and justification spoken of, ver. 16, 18. and more remotely to depravity and holiness, as the effects and consequences of the sin and righteousness, that are imputed for condemnation and justification, one of which *reigned unto death*; and through the other of which *grace reigns unto eternal life*, as is observed in the winding up of the whole argument, ver. 21. But in whatever sense we understand our being *made sinners*, and *made righteous*, the apostle here speaks of it as brought to pass, not by any personal acts of our own, but by the *disobedience of Adam*, and the *obedience of Christ*. This is too plain to be denied; and therefore some, to serve an hypothesis, would have it, that *made sinners* signifies only *made mortal*, or *subjected to death*, by the sentence of God: But though the word *sinners* (*αμαρτωλοι*) occurs near fifty times in the New Testament, I cannot find that it is ever once used in this sense; and the apostle, at the head of his argument in this chapter, ver. 12. evidently distin-

guishes sin from death. By *one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin*, &c. Sin is the *cause*, and death the *effect*; and therefore *sinners* and *mortal* cannot mean one and the same thing, especially in a discourse where *sin* and death had been so accurately distinguished at the very beginning of it. See the second note on ver. 12. And how absurd is it to suppose, with a late author, that impenitent sinners of mankind shall be *judicially constituted righteous*, barely by being raised to life again; since their resurrection will be to damnation, shame, and everlasting contempt, in opposition to a resurrection to everlasting life. Dan. xii. 2. and John v. 29.

† As the apostle undoubtedly meant, that by *Adam's act* of disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, many were *made sinners*: So the beauty of the antithesis would, in great measure, be lost, if we were not to suppose that he included the *active*, as well as passive obedience of Christ, both of which were indeed one entire course of obedience unto death, (Phil. ii. 8.) as that by which many shall be *made righteous*. And it is observable, that being made or constituted sinners, is spoken of as what all mankind already were, by the disobedience of Adam: But being made or constituted righteous, by the obedience of Christ, is spoken of as a future benefit, which shall take place upon all those that through faith come under him as their head of influence, as well as of representation.

20 Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

they being comprehended in this second covenant-head, who went through this obedience unto death, as their representative, in their room and stead.

20 And (as) in process of time, long after the entrance of sin and death, (ver. 12.) the *Mosaic* law, including its moral parts, was introduced by special revelation among the *Israelites*; not that they might be justified by it, but that, by its discovering how far they fell short of its holy requirements, and how their native corruption was rather irritated than suppressed, by the strict holiness of its precepts, and the severity of its curse, they might see that the fall (*παρὰ τὴν*) of their first father and covenant-head had, by its malignant effects, made the power of sin to abound in them*; and might be the more deeply impressed with a sense of the heinousness and provocation of that first sin, and of all their own personal transgressions, which, in consequence of it, and under its influence, they had wilfully and injuriously committed, and by which they had practically approved of, and consented to, *Adam's* act of disobedience. But so surprising and endearing are the glorious riches of divine grace, which takes its motives and arguments from itself, and proceeds directly contrary to the ill deserts of the creature, that among those, in whom sin, with all its aggravations, had thus prevailed, and to whom, in every view, it had thus appeared to be abominable, and headstrong, and deserving of condemnation and death, the free, matchless and sovereign love and favour of God, took an advantage, in the most illustrious, extensive, and superabounding manner, to exert and display itself in pardoning not only that first sin, but all their multiplied actual transgressions, (ver. 16.) and in advancing them to higher happiness than they lost by the fall.

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through

21 And God, in his infinite wisdom, has taken this method to set off the riches and the freeness of his self-moving goodness and mercy, (*ἵνα*) to the end that, as sin †, through the offence of the first covenant-head,

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* God's design in giving the law was, not to promote the increase of sin, or to encourage the sinner's committing it; but to demonstrate the horrible evil of sin in a clear and striking light; and to lay the conscience under an affecting conviction of it; and that, in subservience to his further design of displaying, recommending, and setting off his grace in Christ, with the greater advantage, that the sinner might see his absolute

need of it, and might be brought the more gladly and heartily to embrace it, and rejoice in it. What the apostle says chap. vii. 7.—10. casts a good light upon this passage.

† Here *sin* and *grace* are, by a noble vigorous *prosopopeia*, said to reign, as if they were persons that exercised sovereign dominion; as *death* also was represented, ver. 14, 17. and as *sin* and *righteousness* are, under the like figure,

through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

nant-head, (*ver.* 17.) had in a tyrannical manner usurped the throne, exercised its cruel dominion, and gathered strength, still more, and more, till it had quite mastered the whole world, and bore down all before it, unto the rendering of *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, dead in sin, and obnoxious, not only to temporal, but eternal death, in opposition to eternal life, (see the note on *ver.* 12.) and unto its triumphing in their destruction, and in death, (*in tu dominum*) as in its proper territories: Even so, on the contrary, the riches of God's free grace might set up its throne on the ruins of sin, and might triumph, like a glorious and superior sovereign, in swaying its powerful, mild, and holy sceptre, in pardoning and subduing all iniquity, and in spreading abroad the blessings of salvation, through the perfect and infinitely excellent righteousness, even the obedience and sufferings of another covenant-head, (*ver.* 18, 19.) unto a recovery to a spiritual life of communion with God, and devotedness to him here, and unto a resurrection to, and an inheritance of, everlasting life, in a complete enjoyment of him hereafter, by the special and effectual mediation of Jesus, the new covenant-head and surety; in whom all of us that believe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, have a peculiar interest, as our Lord and King, who will save us.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a happy state is the believer brought into by the gospel! He is justified through faith in the blood of Christ, and shall be saved from wrath through him, by whom he has received the atonement: He has peace and reconciliation with God, and free access into a state of grace, in which he stands with humble boldness, and everlasting continuance; and may glory even in tribulations, as they work patience, experience, and a solid well grounded hope, which shall never make him ashamed, because a sense of divine love is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given to him: And he may now joy in God, as his own God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in an assured hope of his glory: since being already reconciled to God, and justified by the blood of a crucified Christ, he shall most certainly be saved from the wrath to come through him. O how endearing, matchless, and undeserved is the love of God! Though scarce a man can be found, that would lay down his life for the most excellent and generous friend; yet so amazing is the love of God, that he sent his own Son, who freely came, in due season, to undergo the worst of deaths for sinners, and to purchase all these best of blessings for them, even while they were considered as impotent, enemies, and ungodly. Alas! How were all mankind plunged into sin, condemnation, and death, by the apostacy of their first covenant-head, which involved infants in guilt and ruin, who suffer and die, as well as all the rest of his natural offspring! But blessed be God for the remedy provided in the *second Adam*, of which the *first* was a type or figure, with regard to the public capacity, in which they both, by covenant-constitution, represent all their respective seeds: By this recovering

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in the following chapter, from the rather righteousness of our own: Otherwise to the 20th verse. And grace reigning there would be no room for the objection that follows, chap. vi. 1. *shall we through righteousness, must relate to the righteousness of Christ, and not to any continue in sin that grace may abound?*

recovering head, imputed righteousness is brought in, to take off imputed sin : Through him there is salvation for dying infants, on the foot of a new covenant, and for all adult persons that believe in him ; all his spiritual seed, of what age or nation soever, shall be discharged from original guilt and condemnation, and shall be made righteous and justified unto eternal life. And, O how much greater and more effectual, are the blessings brought in by Jesus Christ, the second covenant-head, to all that hold under him, than the loss and ruin, that are entailed by the first covenant-head, on all that stand under him ! These may, and shall be retrieved, with respect to multitudes of the fallen race, and *that* with a rich over-plus, and without a revocation : Their innumerable personal transgressions, as well as original sin, are forgiven ; and they are entitled to an everlasting and heavenly life, through the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, as the gift of God's free and overflowing grace, and shall reign in life by Jesus Christ for ever. And what an endearing enhancement of this free favour is it, that where sin has abounded, as it eventually hath, and appears to have done, by means of God's righteous and holy law ; grace much more abounds by the gospel ! And that as sin has reigned unto death, in all its terrors, relating to this world and the next ; so grace reigns with uncontrollable sovereignty and power, and with the brightest glory, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord ! May we be humbled under a sense of our guilt and ruin by Adam's fall ? and be thankful for the door of hope which is opened in Christ and his righteousness for the worst of sinners, by the super-abounding grace of God ! And may we take heed of denying *imputed sin*, as ever we would not exclude ourselves from the benefit of *imputed righteousness* !

C H A P. VI.

The apostle having established the doctrine of justification by the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, guards against a licentious abuse of it, by shewing the necessity of believers dying to sin, and living to God ; because they are dead to the law, 1, 2. Because they are obliged to all holiness by their Christian baptism and union with Christ, 3,—10. Because they are made alive to God, and are freed from the dominion of sin, 11,—20. And because of the contrary fruits and issues of sin and holiness, one of which is death, and the other everlasting life, 21,—23.

TEXT.

WHAT shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ?

PARAPHRASE.

IF justification depends entirely on the free grace of God, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness ; and if where sin has abounded, grace much more abounds, as has been argued, (*chap. v. 17,—21.*) * some may object, and say, What is the consequence of this doctrine ? Doth it not lead to all licentiousness ? May we not take occasion from hence

NOTE.

* This verse is evidently brought in as an objection to what the apostle had delivered about the justification of believing Jews, as well as Gentiles, merely by the rich aboundings of free and undeserved grace, through the righteousness of Christ, in the foregoing discourse, and particularly at the close of the last chapter, which undoubtedly refers to

one as well as the other. And therefore the design of this chapter, which contains a large answer to that objection, is not to be confined *Gentile* Christians, especially since the answer is equally applicable to the state of *all* believers, and the apostle all along includes himself ; and since the objection was more likely to be made by the Jew than the Gentile.

to go on in a course of sin, and think ourselves at liberty to live, and even abound, in the commission of it, that the riches of free grace may be the more gloriously exalted, and illustrated, in abundantly pardoning it?

1 God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

2 I roundly answer, with just abhorrence, (*Mat. vii. 1-10*) No, by no means*: This would be the vilest abuse of the most endearing and comfortable truth, directly contrary to its holy nature and design. For, though we cannot be justified by any of our own works; yet how can we, who profess and are obliged to die unto sin, and who are really mortified in our affections to it, as to the worst of evils, in case we be sincere believers; How, I say, in any consistence with our state and character, and with a sense of duty and gratitude; or with what conscience, hope, or peace, can such as we are, go on any longer in a course of sin, or allow ourselves in the practice of any known iniquity? it is monstrously absurd to suppose such a thing.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

3 For the *mortification*, together with the remission of sins, was signified and sealed in our Christian baptism: Do ye not understand the meaning and obligation of this solemn ordinance? Is it not, that as many of us as have been baptized with water into the faith, profession, and obedience of Christ, by his authority, and according to his institution; and as many of us as, correspondent thereunto, have been effectually planted into Christ, (*ver. 5.*) or united with him, as members of his mystical body, were baptized into a conformity to his death, and into communion with him in the benefits purchased by it, unto the crucifying of sin? And were we not thereby brought under federal obligations to fall in with his great design in dying, which was to redeem us from all iniquity? (*Ti. ii. 14.*)

4 Therefore we are buried with him

4 Therefore, to lead you still further into this argument, we are not only obliged by our baptism to be

N O T E.

* The objection that carnal minds are naturally apt to make against justification by God's grace, through the righteousness of Christ, is not to be answered by allowing that our own righteousness is to be joined in part with his to justify; for, on that supposition, there would be no room for the objection: But it is to be answered by shewing, as the apostle doth, the indispensable necessity of personal holiness, on other accounts, in them that are justified, and the inseparable connection that is fixed, by the ordination of God in the gospel, between

these things, without blending them together, or confounding one with the other. While therefore we, after the apostle's example, adhere strictly to the doctrines of grace, and guard in this manner against the abuse of them, we may be satisfied that our doctrine is the same, and fully answers the same objections with his: And while we keep both these points in view, in our dealings with God, and walking in newness of life before him, we need not fear a miscarriage in our way to heaven,

him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together

be conformable to Christ's death, in the crucifixion of sin, but likewise to his burial*, in giving plain proofs, with continuance, that we are really dead to it, in order to our having communion with him also in his life; that, as Christ's human body was quickened and raised again from the dead, by the glorious operation of God the Father, as well as by his own power; and for demonstrating that he had glorified his Father upon earth, by his obedience unto death, and was going to be glorified with, and by him, and to live to his glory in heaven†: even so, in resemblance of Christ, and by virtue derived from him, as our living head, we also, being quickened to a spiritual and heavenly life, should walk in the whole tenor of our conversation, with freedom, constancy, and progressiveness, in all holy obedience, with new principles, motives, and ends, and by a new rule, to the praise and glory of God, as those that, by his almighty power and grace, are made alive to him.

5 For if, as is signified by baptism, we have been indeed in like manner incorporated with Christ, as members

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* As the ordinance of baptism seems plainly to be sometimes represented by sprinkling or pouring water; as particularly when God is said to *save us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*: (Tit. iii. 5, 6. and see the note on Matth. iii. 6.) So some have thought that it is here mentioned with an allusion to the laying of a body under water, and yet, that even this more naturally alludes to the throwing of earth upon the dead corpse, in which the body is entirely passive, and not at all active in going down into the grave, than to plunging it into the earth. However, were we to admit that the apostle, in this place, alludes to dipping; the most, I think, we can gather from the whole is, that baptism was sometimes administered in one of these ways, and sometimes in the other, and that it cannot be said of either of these particular modes, that it is essential to this ordinance; and therefore it is pity that there should be such warm contentions as have troubled the church of Christ, about so little and so disputable a thing as the external mode of its administration. But, after all, I am very much of opinion with Mr. Henry, or his continuator, Dr. Evans, who, in the exposition of this passage, says, "Why this burying in baptism should so much as allude to any custom of dipping under water in

baptism, any more than our baptismal crucifixion and death should have any such reference, I confess I cannot see. "It is plain that it is not the sign, but the thing signified in baptism, that the apostle here calls being buried with Christ; and the expression of burying alludes to Christ's burial: As Christ was buried, that he might rise to a new and more heavenly life: So we are in baptism buried, i. e. cut off from the life of sin, that we may rise again to a new life in faith and love." And others have thought that the reference is only to the benefits of spiritual baptism, and that nothing can be concluded about the external mode of baptism from the verse more than from the next, which speaks of our being therein symbolically planted together in the likeness of Christ's death; or than from the figure of baptism saving us, as represented by the floating of Noah's ark, when the few that were in it were saved by water 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. But no mode of baptism can be signified by either of these.

† For by the glory (*δια τῆς δόξης*) some would read to the glory, as the phrase (*δια δόξης*) is rendered in 1 Pet. 3. And this sense seems most agreeable to the following context, and to the clause of the verse before us; though it must be owned that the preposition (*δια*) with a genitive case, commonly signifies by.

ther in the likeness
of his death, we
shall be also in the
likeness of his re-
surrection:

members of the same body with their head *; or have been jointly set into him, like branches into the vine, or a cion into the stock, by vital union with him, for a participation of such virtue from him, as makes us conformable to his death, in a separation between our souls and sin, as there was between his soul and body: We shall also, by being thus grafted into him, be formed into the similitude of his risen state; and so shall not only have fellowship with him in his sufferings and death, but likewise in the quickening power of his resurrection, (*Phil. iii. 10.*) to enable us to live continually after his likeness, in all holiness to God here, till we come to live, soul and body, with the risen Saviour, in all his glory for ever hereafter.

6 Knowing this,
that our old man is
crucified with him,
that the body of
sin might be de-
stroyed, that hence-
forth we should not
serve sin.

6 This we, who are true believers, may be well assured of, to our comfort and hope; because we know, and believe, (*ver. 8.*) upon the principles of the gospel-revelation, that the corruption of nature, which works with subtilty, and spreads through all the members of our bodies, and faculties of our souls, and is as ancient as our beings, yea, as the fall of *Adam*, from whom it is derived; but which is already broken in its strength, and daily declining in the believer's soul, and stands opposed to that new nature which we are made partakers of by regenerating grace: We know, I say, that what on these accounts may be called *our old man*, as it dwells in us, is mortally wounded, in order to its gradually languishing, till it shall utterly expire, in conformity to Christ's body having been crucified unto death; and by the merit and efficacy of his crucifixion, as our Head and Redeemer: He having died for this very end and purpose, that the whole frame of indwelling sin, together with all its strength and activity in all its parts and members, may be gradually, and yet violently mortified and subdued, till it be utterly destroyed; that we, from this time forward, may never willingly yield ourselves up to its inclinations and influence, and serve its interests and designs, as if it were still to have the rule and dominion over us; but may die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (*1 Pet. ii. 24.*)

7 For he that is
dead is freed from
sin.

7 For he that is thus dead to the love and reign of sin, and in conformity to his crucified Head and Saviour, and to the design and obligation of his death, and by virtue derived from it, (*δικαιωται*) is legally acquitted from any further claim that this tyrant might

NOTE

* Planted together, (*συνεσποτοι*) may relate either to all believers being alike ingrafted into Christ; or to their being jointly united together with him, as their head, or stock, or root of supply.

might pretend to have to his obedience; yea, he is actually set at liberty from its domineering power and command over him, and is delivered from all allowed inclinations and desires to serve it, as is the case of those that have died out of the service of their former lords and masters, or have been willingly transferred from theirs, to the service of another and better lord.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

8 Now, to argue a little upon this point, if we are so far partakers of virtue from Christ, by our union to him, as to have communion with him, and resemble him, in his death, by our being effectually dead to sin; we are fully persuaded, upon the most rational and divinely assured grounds, (*ver. 22. and chap. viii. 13. and 2 Tim. ii. 11.*) that we shall partake of like influence from him, to engage and enable us to live a spiritual, holy, and heavenly life here, after his example, and as those that are quickened together with him, (*Eph. ii. 5.*) till we shall be raised to an immortal life of blessedness and glory, to dwell with our living head in a future state of all perfection and delights for ever.

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

9 This we are fully satisfied in, upon the foot of conformity to him, as knowing that the resurrection of Christ, our public head of righteousness and influence, is for eternity; so that he will never die again, or return to a mortal life, like that which he had before upon earth, as others have done, that were raised to a temporal life, by *Elijah* and *Elisba*, and by himself and his apostles. No, death and mortality neither have, nor ever shall have, the least power over him again, any more than if he had never lived a frail life in this world at all, and had never died out of it; but he, who *was dead, is now alive; and, behold, he lives for evermore.* (*Rev. i. 18.*)

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

10 For, as to his death on the cross, to take away the power, as well as the guilt and punishment of sin, by the sacrifice of himself*; this was so effectual to answer its end, that he has no need of dying, nor will die again for that purpose; (*Heb. ix. 26, 28.*) but, as to his life, which he is risen to, it is all heavenly, immortal, and divine, above the reach of sin and death; and is all to the glory of God; which is illustriously displayed in his resurrection, and is more and more advanced by all that he doth, as our risen and exalted Head and Saviour in heaven.

11 Likewise reckon

11 Even so, to apply this to your own particular case,

N O T E.

* To say, with some, that Christ's dying to sin signifies his dying, that there might be no sin in him, is to suppose that he had sin in him before, or at least was liable to it, which can scarce be excused from blasphemy.

on ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

case *, Do ye also, who believe, judge, and account yourselves, as ye ought, upon mature consideration, to be in like manner, entirely, utterly and everlastingly dead to sin once for all, by virtue of your union and communion with your once crucified Redeemer, and in conformity to him, who demands it, and has purchased and gives grace for it; so as never to serve sin more, nor ever to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: But, on the contrary, look upon yourselves to be spiritually alive, in your hearts and affections, towards every thing that is holy and heavenly, in resemblance of your risen and exalted Head; that ye may love, serve, and glorify God, in thought, word, and deed, as being quickened with a new principle of supernatural life, which is communicated from Jesus Christ, your Lord and mine, who lives, as well as died for us.

11 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

12 As ever therefore ye would act up to the privilege, dignity, and duty of your Christian state and character, and would prove yourselves to be what ye make a profession of, take heed that sin never enthrone itself in your corruptible bodies, which, with all their pleasures and enjoyments, will soon die; and that ye never employ them in its service for executing its vile designs: Though they be liable to death by reason

K k k 2

of

N O T E.

* Here the apostle alters the form of address. He all along, in the foregoing verses, had been laying down *principles*, in a categorical, or affirmative stile, that carry obligations to holiness, and qualify for it: And those expositors exceedingly strain the rules of grammar, torture his expressions, and weaken the force of his argument, who would turn his *assertions* in ver. 5, 8. which are equivalent to *promises* of what true believers *shall be*, into *declarations* of what they *ought to be*, with respect to their *likeness to Christ in his resurrection*, and to their *living with him*. But, in this and the three following verses, he plainly goes into the *exhortative* form, upon the principles before laid down, to shew what good improvement they ought to make of these rich advantages for *dying to sin, and living to God*; and then, in ver. 14. he enforces these exhortations, by assuring them that, according to the well-ordered provisions of the covenant of grace, they should have such aids and assistances to invigorate their endeavours, as should secure the event; so that *sin should not have dominion over them*: And, upon this bot-

tom, he proceeds to further reasonings and exhortations to take off the force of the objection, as if they might give way to sin, *because they were not under the law, but under grace*, ver. 15, &c.

Now all this will appear to be a very consistent and nervous thread of reasoning, if we consider these promises and exhortations, as directed to the body of credibly professing believers, whom the apostle looked upon in the judgment of charity, to be really what they professed to be, though some of them might be only in name and appearance what others of them were in truth: For the *exhortations* were given as proper means of stirring up their diligent attention, and conscientious regard to the mentioned duties, that they might come into God's way of performing his promises, and might evidence themselves to be indeed interested in them; and the *promises* were given to encourage their utmost attempts, in dependence on divine grace, for complying with the exhortations, since the promises were to be fulfilled only, in a method worthy of God, to them that should prove to be true believers.

of sin *, as Christ's body once was, that he might make atonement for it ; and though they be not yet delivered from the power of death, as his risen and glorified body now is ; yet, as they are freed from the dominion of sin, (*ver. 7.*) do not subject yourselves again to its hateful tyranny, so as to yield a voluntary obedience to the corrupt desires and solicitations of the flesh, which still remain in you †.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead ; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

13 Nor do ye, at any time, voluntarily give up the members of your bodies, such as your hands or feet, your eyes, tongues, or ears † ; nor the affections of your souls, such as your love and hatred, hope and fear, to be unjustly employed, as (*ver. 12.*) military weapons for serving the cause of sin, and gratifying its perverse inclinations, as if *that* were the lord which ought to reign over you : But on the contrary, present your whole selves, soul and body, (*chap. xii. 1.*) and all that ye are, and have, with full consent, and without reserve, to God, through Jesus Christ, as your rightful and only Sovereign, to whom all obedience is due, that ye may therein act like those who are indeed quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the regenerating Spirit ; and so may cheerfully yield up all the members of your bodies, and affections of your souls, which are his, (*1 Cor. vi. 20.*) as weapons to be used in a just and righteous manner for God, and devoted to his service, according to his commandments, and his right, in your war against sin.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

14 For, if ye really are what ye profess to be, it is certain, that though, while ye continue in this imperfect mortal state, the corruption of nature will work and strive for the mastery in you ; and may trouble and perplex you, and sometimes surprise and wound you, and bring you into an unwilling captivity ; (*chap. vii. 23.*) yet it shall never gain your approbation and full consent, nor recover an allowed and uncontrolled power, or lord it over you : For your standing is removed from under the *first* to the *second* covenant-head, which have been spoken of at large ; (*chap.*

NOTES.

* The *body* seems here to be styled *mortal*, in correspondence to what had been said in the preceding verses about Christ's having died.

† The exhortation, *not to obey sin in the lusts thereof*, strongly intimates, that there were still some workings of it in believers themselves, and would be so, as long as they should continue to be mortal ; and in the *lusts thereof* (*τῶν τῶν αἰσθητικῶν αὐτῶν*) refers, by the gender in the Greek, to your mortal body, (*τὸ*

σῶμα ὑμῶν σωματικόν) and not to *sin* (*ἡ ἀμαρτία*) or to it (*αὐτῇ*).

† The affections are to the soul what legs and arms are to the body, for motion and action ; and so may, in a metaphorical sense, be called its *members* here, and in *ver. 19.* ; as also in *chap. vii. 5, 23.* And as these active powers of the soul are to be employed against sin, and for God, I think they may be included in the apostle's meaning. See the note on *chap. vii. 5.*

(chap. v. 14.—21.) and so ye are not under the law, as a covenant of works, (see the note on chap. vii. 4.) to be dealt with according to its tenor; nor under its terrors, and bondage-frame of spirit, in obeying it, which severely forbids, and condemns for every sin, and yet affords no effectual *assistance* against it, any more than a *pardon* of it: But ye are under the covenant of grace, which contains unchangeable promises, and never failing springs of strength, assistance, and preservation from utter apostacy, and generous filial motives to all obedience, as well as free forgiveness of all your disallowed sins, through the blood of Christ; and ye are under the dominion of the gratuitous favour and love of God, which *reigns through righteousness unto eternal life*; (chap. v. 21.) and are under the government of that principle of grace, whereby he has put his new covenant seal into your hearts to keep down the dominion of sin, and to prevent your totally and finally departing from him. (*Jer. xxxii. 40.*)

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

15 What! Shall any of us then still have recourse to, and hang upon the objection which the enemies of the grace of God make, and which has been already put, and answered? (*ver. 1, &c.*) Or shall we take occasion, from this encouraging and important doctrine, to allow ourselves in any sin, or go on in the practice of it, because we are no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but are under the sure and well-ordered covenant of grace, which puts us under the dominion of God's free favour*, that we may live under the power of that gracious principle, which he, according to his promise, infuses into us? Far be it from us (*μενουμεν*) to entertain such an abominable thought, so directly contrary to the perfections of God, and the whole design of his gospel, and so inconsistent with our own being under grace. (See the note on *ver. 2.*)

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience

16 Surely ye cannot be ignorant, that, in the very nature of things, whatever lord or master ye willingly, deliberately, and with prevailing bent of heart, surrender, or give up yourselves unto, as servants to do his will, and obey his commands, his proper servants ye in fact are, to whom ye so voluntarily let out, or sell yourselves, and yield obedience†: And this

N O T E S.

* As *grace* may signify, either the *covenant of grace*, or God's *free favour* to us, or the *principle of grace* which is wrought in us, I have taken all these senses into the interpretation of this and the preceding verse; though I appre-

hend that the *first* of them is principally intended, *vis.* Our being under the *covenant of grace*, which includes, or necessarily inters all the rest.

† In this and the following verses, the apostle alludes to a common and well-known

bedience unto righteousness?

this is applicable in the present case, whether your obedience be to sin, that cruel tyrant, whose service deserves, tends to, and issues in death and ruin here, and for ever; or whether it be to holiness, by the obedience of faith, for bringing forth fruits of righteousness to God, to promote his interest and glory, and agreeable to his nature and will, which lead the way to eternal life; (ver. 21,—23.) ye cannot divide your chosen services between two such opposite masters, as our Lord himself has told us. (Mat. vi. 24.)

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

17 But blessed be God, that, as your holy profession declares, and it is meet for me to think of you all, it can only be said, with respect to the *time past*, that ye willingly embarked in the service of sin, to have your *conversation in the lusts of the flesh, and fulfil the desires of the flesh, and of the mind*: (Eph. ii. 3.) But by the efficacious power of his grace, which has made a thorough change upon your whole souls, ye, who formerly were the voluntary servants of sin, have *now*, not feignedly, in pretence and profession only, nor merely in external behaviour and appearance; but sincerely, deliberately, freely, and resolvedly, as from your very hearts *, yielded cheerful obedience to the authority of God, in the evangelical doctrines and commands, which have been communicated to you by Christ, and us, his apostles, and have been impressed upon you by the attending operations of his Spirit; yea, into the very form and image of which ye have been cast, by a divine energy, as into a mould, which has left the print of its amiable lineaments upon you, that ye might be exactly conformable to it, as wax is to the seal, or as coin is to the die, line answering to line. (*ὡς ὁ παραδοτός τύπος διδάχης.*)

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants

18 And (ye) being, in this happy and effectual manner, set at liberty from the dominion and lordship of sin, whose odious form is hereby obliterated, whose rule

NOTES.

known custom in those days, with regard to slaves or servants, that were the property of their masters, who, at their pleasure, either kept them for life, or turned them over to another master, or made them free.

* The apostle's saying, *ye have obeyed from the heart*, in opposition to what they had formerly done, when they were the *servants of sin*, gives us a key to his whole discourse about the *service of sin*, and the *service of righteousness*; and shews that we are to understand him, as speaking all along in this chapter of a

voluntary obedience, in opposition to that forced and unwilling captivity to the law of sin in his members, which he speaks of chap. vii. 14,—23. (See the note there on ver. 14.) Accordingly he, in this chapter, expresses their obedience to sin, by *yielding themselves and their members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and yielding themselves as servants to obey it*, as well as their afterwards doing the like with regard to God and holiness; and calls the service of sin, *obeying it in the lusts of their mortal body*. Ver. 12, 13, 16, 17, 19.

wants of righteousness.

rule and tyranny are hereby defeated, and whose power and interest, in the will, affections, and conversation, are hereby destroyed; ye became the devoted and willing servants of true holiness, in conformity to the righteous will and law of God, which henceforward has the rule and command over you, as a governing principle within you; and has enthroned itself, like an acknowledged and rightful sovereign, in your hearts.

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

19 I represent these things in such comparative forms of speech, as are familiarly known, and plainly understood, among men, in the case of masters and servants; it being a common practice, especially among you, *Romans*, for servants to change masters, and to pay as chearful service to the last as to the first: And I choose to make use of these strong and lively figures, that I may the better accommodate myself to your capacities; because of your imperfect ways of conceiving spiritual things, by reason of the enfeebling remainder of corruption in you *, and of your receiving ideas more easily by sensible observation and experience, than by any other means, while ye are in the body: For, if ye reflect on the force and tendency of the similitude I have been using, ye may easily observe, that as formerly, in the days of your unregeneracy, ye resigned and employed the various members of your bodies, and affections of your souls, (see the note on *ver.* 13.) in voluntarily serving the most tyrannical and enslaving lords, such as the principles and habits of uncleanness †, unrighteousness, and ungodliness, which have ruled and reigned over you by your own consent; and as ye have gone on in all manner of abominations to the increasing of iniquity, and making yourselves more and more guilty, vile, and miserable, by adding sin to sin: Even so, being now brought into a state of grace, and having changed masters, think how fit, how worthy, just, and reasonable it is, that ye should act up to the dignity, obligation, and sanctity of your new character and relation, by yielding up all the members of your bodies,

NOTES.

* *Flesh* in this passage may relate, either to the remaining corruption of human nature, which is often called *flesh*, and has enfeebled the powers of the mind; or it may be taken for the mass of *flesh* which chiefly composes the human body, and is the means of sensation, and the means, which we are so much indebted to, that we find a difficulty in forming conceptions, that have no affinity with it, or assistance from it.

† *Uncleanness* and *iniquity*, in the former part of this sentence, may be considered as the lords and masters to which they had yielded themselves, answerable to the turn and drift of all the foregoing discourse; and their *yielding themselves* hereunto, in the latter part of the sentence, is said to be *unto iniquity*, as works of iniquity are the services which they had performed to those masters: And in the same manner we may understand their being afterwards *servants to*

bodies, and all your powers and faculties, without reserve, as servants to an opposite and most excellent master, even to righteousness; unto the bringing forth of the genuine fruits of holiness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God, that ye may be more and more holy and fruitful in every good word and work, by henceforth doing more for God than ye have ever heretofore done in the service of sin.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

20 For while ye were the willing servants of sin, devoted to its interests, and entirely under its power and dominion, by a chosen subjection to it, ye were not under the rule and government of principles of righteousness; but were wholly strangers, and disaffected to it, and did not maintain a sense of your obligations to regard it, but rather neglected and opposed it, and pleased yourselves with the thoughts of having cast off the holy restraints which it would have laid upon you*; But how much soever ye might imagine yourselves to be *free* in that condition, ye were in reality the most miserable and abject slaves, as a little serious reflection may satisfy you.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

21 Let me then ask you, What real profit, honour, or pleasure, did ye find, or could ye expect, in your former sinful courses, even while ye were pursuing them, and indulging yourselves in them? Were they not attended with remorse, defilement and reproach, trouble and disappointment, loss and mischief to yourselves? And did they not leave a sting behind them? Could ye ever reflect, with any satisfaction, or peace, upon those abominable crimes, for which ye are now justly filled with holy confusion, self-abasement, and shame, in every review of them, and things that were foolish, and unworthy in themselves, and highly ungrateful, offensive, and dishonourable to God? Were they not all unfruitful works of darkness? (*Eph. v. 11.*) They certainly were: For the direct tendency, and due desert of those evil practices, as ye now well know, and cannot but own, were nothing less than destruction and death, temporal and eternal; and they would certainly have issued in the worst of all miseries, that are a deprivation of, and stand in opposition to everlasting life, (*ver. 22.*) had

N O T E.

* *Free from righteousness* is not mentioned as a privilege, but as the misery of their natural state; for that sort of liberty was really the worst of slavery, though they might not think it so, while they chose to be under it: Nor doth it signify that they were discharged from obligations to righteousness; for these

are immutable and eternal: But it intimates, that, while they were the servants of sin, they, in the practical sense of their own minds, were at loose company with respect to God and holiness, and did not regard the bonds which lay upon them to be holy.

not God, in the greatness of his compassion, prevented it, by turning you from all your iniquities to himself, through a Redeemer.

21 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

22 But now the case is happily altered with you, who, by the mighty power, and abounding grace of God, are brought under another head and covenant, and under the dominion of other principles: Being now set at liberty from the love and liking, reign and tyranny, as well as from the guilt of sin, and thereby restored to the truest and noblest freedom; and being made the willing and obedient servants of the great and blessed God, which is your highest honour and advantage; ye bring forth, and reap a better, a more excellent and delightful sort of fruit, the very best that can be, in the renewed course of your lives, which tends unto, and produces evangelical holiness, with growing increases of it, in this world; and the final issue and perfection of which is no less, than eternal glory and blessedness, free from all remainder of sin, shame, or sorrow, in the world to come.

23 For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

23 For all the wages which sin pays, as the natural, just and proper recompence, that is due for the drudgery sustained in doing its work, and is allotted to its servants by the holy law of God, is the worst imaginable; even that dreadful and miserable death, which is not only a separation of soul and body, but an utter exclusion from, and stands directly opposed unto, all the blessedness of eternal life: This is the punishment which all and every sin deserves; and this, like the hire of soldiers, (*σπένδιον*) which is paid in victuals for the toils, hardships, and dangers of war; that they undergo in the service of their lords, is all the food, and all the reward, that the sinner shall ever have from that cruel tyrant. But, on the contrary, the free gift *, which proceeds merely from the grace of God, without the least regard; yea, in opposition, to any merit or desert in us, is infinitely advantageous: It is no less than an everlasting life of the highest honour and felicity, in the immediate presence, and complete enjoyment of, and conformity to the ever glorious God, through the righteousness and mediation of Jesus Christ, in whom we, that believe, have a sure interest; whom we own, honour, love,

NOTE

* The natural antithesis to the wages of sin, would have been the wages of righteousness, or holiness, had it been consistent with truth: But instead of that, wages and gift are here opposed; one to the other; because, though death is the just reward of the service done for sin; yet eternal life is merely the unmerited

gift of grace, without any worthiness in us to entitle us to it; and the opposition, that, in this and the preceding verses, is made between death and eternal life, shews that the death which is the fruit of sin, takes in that which is eternal, as well as that which is temporal.

love, and serve; and whom we humbly claim and depend upon, as our Lord and Saviour.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How groundless and injurious are all charges of licentiousness on the doctrine of justification alone by the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ! Though no good works of our own bear any part in our justification before God, yet they stand in a close and necessary connection with it; and nothing can be more detestable, than to continue in sin, that grace may the more abound in pardoning it. For how shall we, that are by profession and obligation, and, if true believers, are in fact dead to sin, live any longer therein? This would be a flat contradiction to our baptismal engagement, and to all that was signified by it, and is answerable to it; would be absolutely inconsistent with our character, privilege, and duty, as members of Christ, that have communion with him in his death and resurrection, and with all realizing views by faith of deliverance from sin and wrath, and of an advancement to eternal glory, through him.—How excellent is the effect of regenerating grace; it includes both a mortification of sin, that the old man may be destroyed, and spiritual quicknings to a holy and heavenly life, that we may walk before God with new principles and ends, and according to a new rule, in imitation of Christ, and by virtue derived from his death and resurrection, to the glory of God. How certainly may we judge, whether sin or holiness has the ascendancy in our hearts and lives! Which ever of these we willingly yield ourselves up unto, *that* is the Lord that rules over us. We all once were the servants of iniquity, as appeared by our chusing its works, obeying its dictates, and taking pleasure in violating every bond to holiness: But, blessed be God, true believers are moulded into the spirit of the gospel, which, under divine influence, has a transforming efficacy upon them; they are set at liberty from the commanding power of sin; they hate and abhor it, and by no means approve of it, in any instance whatsoever; and they are become, in their very hearts, servants to God and righteousness. How concerned then should they be, to live under a constant sense of what belongs to their state, as Christians! They should reckon themselves to be entirely dead to sin, as those that have nothing more to do with it; but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord: Though sin still remains, and is striving for the mastery in them, they should never give way to its efforts; but yield up their whole selves, body and soul, to the Lord. And how great are their inducements and assistances to quit the service of sin for the service of God! Though they are still under the law, as a rule of life, they are not under it as a severe and impracticable covenant, nor under its curse; but are taken under the covenant of grace, which contains the strongest securities against sin's recovering its dominion over them; and they are freed from the dreadful lordship of sin. What fruit has any one ever found, worth having, in its ways and works, even while he was employed in them? They are matter of the greatest shame, and their just wages are all miseries unto eternal death. But there is a present pleasure in the ways of holiness; and its happy issue is everlasting life, not indeed as the wages of righteousness, but as the mere gift of God's free grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C H A P. VII.

The apostle shews that believers are not under the law, as a covenant; but are married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, as a further argument against sin, and for holiness, 1,—6. Sets forth the use and excellence of the law, in other views of it, though it be not sufficient to remove the guilt, or master the power of sin, 7,—13. And describes the spiritual conflicts between corruption and grace in a believer's heart, 14,—25.

TEXT.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak

PARAPHRASE.

LET me now a little further argue the point, particularly with those of you, my dear brethren in Christ.

think to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Christ, that have been converted from among the Jews*, relating to your deliverance from the law-covenant, (*chap. vi. 14. &c.*) in such a manner, as frees you from the dominion of sin, that ye may live unto God; (for I would now address myself in a special manner to those that are acquainted with the law given by Moses, and so may the more readily apprehend what I am going to say,) Are ye not well satisfied, that the authority of the law continues, and is binding to a man, as long as, and no longer than, he lives under it, and so stands related to it? Ye surely cannot be ignorant of so plain a truth as this.

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

2 For, to illustrate the matter by a known and familiar instance, it is undeniably plain, that a married woman is tied, and continues under obligation to her husband, by the law of wedlock, which establishes the relation between them, all the days of his life, or till death shall part them: But if her husband dies, the relation ceases between them, and she is discharged from the law, which, in the nature of a covenant, bound her to her husband; so that he has no longer any right to her, nor is she under any further obligation to him.

3 So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

3 From hence it plainly follows, that if she were to be married to any other man, during her lawful husband's life, she would be justly deemed an adulteress, as having broke the covenant-contract that was between them, and bound her to him, and him only: But if her husband were dead, there would be an end of the relation, and consequently of the marriage-bond which tied her to him; so that she would not be guilty of adultery, nor ought she to be charged with it, in case of her being then married to another man, any more than if she had never been espoused to a former husband.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

4 Therefore, my beloved brethren, to apply what I have now been saying to the state that ye are in toward God, as the law has a right of dominion over a man, only so long as he lives under it, and this has been illustrated by the covenant-obligation of a wife to her husband, which is dissolved by death: So ye, through faith, are become dead to the law, as a covenant, which requires perfect obedience, as the condition of life, and pronounces a curse for every failure; it in this respect is vacated, or disannulled, as

L I I 2

to

N O T E.

* The apostle here directs his disciprles most immediately to the believing Jews, that belonged to the church at Rome, as appears by his appealing unto them, as persons that knew the law. And as their prejudices were so strong for the law, and against salvation by mere grace through Jesus Christ, it was proper to deal particularly with them upon these points.

to you, and has lost its power over you*; infomuch that ye are freed from its terms for justification, or condemnation, by the crucifixion of Christ, who his ownself

NOTE

* As the law had been illustrated, ver. 2, 3, by the law of a husband, which is, properly speaking, a covenant between him and his wife: We, in correspondence thereunto, are naturally led to consider the law, under the notion of a covenant, when the apostle speaks of believers, as *dead to it*, and ver. 6, as *delivered from it*: And considering it in this view, their deliverance is not only from the ceremonial, but likewise from the moral law. Accordingly, he often speaks of the law, in his argument about justification, in such terms as can agree to none but the moral law: For this is the law, the things of which the Gentiles do by nature, and the work of which is written in their hearts, and the Jew, being instructed out of which, approved the things that are more excellent; and this is the law that says, a man shall not steal, and shall not commit adultery; and it is distinguished from, and preferred to the ritual ordinance of circumcision, which was so far from profiting the breakers of this law, that the Gentiles by fulfilling its righteousness would have the advantage of the transgressing Jew. (Chap. ii. 12—27.) This likewise is the law which speaks to them that are under it, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God; by which is the knowledge of sin; and which is not made void, but is established through faith. (Chap. iii. 19, 20, 31.) And this is the law which works wrath to the transgressor of it, (chap. iv. 15.) and entered that the offence might abound. (Chap. v. 20.) It is also the moral law, of which the apostle says, in this seventh chapter, (ver. 5—16.) *The motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died, and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death: Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.—I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.—Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful.—We know that the law is spiritual.—I consent to the law that it is good, &c.* And, in the eighth chapter, verse 4, 7. This is

the law, the righteousness of which is fulfilled in us; and to which the carnal mind is not subject, neither indeed can be.

It is, I think, unquestionable that in most, if not in all these, and several other passages of the apostle's discourse, such things are spoken of as are peculiar to the moral law; and therefore he evidently keeps this in view, at least together with the ceremonial law, and he took in the whole of the religious law of the Jews, as well as the law of nature, when he spoke of our *not being justified by the works of the law*, and of our being *dead to it, and delivered from it*. But then this deliverance from the moral law is to be considered only with reference to it, as a covenant of works, and to the curse, which it pronounces upon every transgressor; and not with respect to it, as the law of creation, and the rule of life: For in this view of it, it is still to be accounted holy, just, and good, ver. 12. and is of eternal and unchangeable obligation; resulting from the creatures relation to God and one another; and in this sense, believers are still, as much as ever, bound by it. The gospel has not, in this respect, set aside the moral law, or substituted a requirement of only sincere imperfect obedience, instead of the perfect law of God, as a rule of life: For as it would not become the holiness of God to give us an imperfect rule of behaviour; so the sincere believer might, in that case, be said to fulfil the utmost of his demands by an imperfect obedience; and would neither have any sin, nor need any pardon. But the truth is, that the grace of the gospel pardons their sins, on Christ's account; while, through the remaining depravity of nature, they cannot, as they themselves would, come up to the perfect demands of the law. Though it is true that they are delivered from all manner of obligation, under the gospel-state, to observe any rites of the ceremonial law: Yet the nature of the apostle's argument, he considers their deliverance from the whole of the Mosaic law, inclusive both of its ceremonial and moral parts, only as it contained terms of life in a covenant way. To all this we may add, that when he particularly meant the ceremonial law, he distinguished it from the moral law, he has

ownself bare your sins in his own body on the tree, (1 Pet. ii. 24.) and redeemed you from the curse of the law, being made a curse for you; (Gal. iii. 13.) that being thus discharged from covenant-obligations to the law, as your former husband, ye might be honourably espoused to another, of a more excellent nature, even to Christ, and might come into a new-covenant-relation to God, through faith in him; who, as he was delivered up to death for your offences, was raised again for your justification. (Chap. iv. 25.) But take heed of thinking, that this deliverance from your former husband, and espousal to Christ is, that ye may be at liberty to live as ye list, without law to God, (1 Cor. ix. 21.) as though its moral precepts did not still bind you to obedience; For the very end and design of this happy alteration in our covenant-state*, who were under the law, is, that being dead to sin we might live unto righteousness; (1 Pet. ii. 24.) and that by a principle of spiritual life, derived from our risen husband and Saviour, we might bring forth fruits of holiness, acceptable in the sight of God, and to his praise and glory, through Jesus Christ.

5 For while we Jews, (I put myself in, it having been my own case in common with yours) while we were in our carnal unconverted state, under the power of corrupt nature, which, for its vileness, and activity in and by the body, may well be termed *flesh*; (chap. viii. 8.) and while we were so immersed in it, as to be *in the flesh*, as a man, who is overcome with strong liquor, is said to be *in drink*; then the violent passions of indwelling corruption, which were irritated by the opposition that the purity of the precepts, and the severity of the curse of the law, made against them, powerfully worked and exerted themselves in the whole man, unto the employing and commanding of all the members of our bodies, and all the faculties of our souls †, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin;

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quently spoke of it in diminutive terms; by its works. (See also the note on sometimes calling it *the law of a carnal* chap. iii. 19.)

* The apostle, with admirable address, varies the *person*, and puts *we* for *ye*, that he might soften what he was going to say in the next verse, about their former vile and guilty circumstances; and might take off the odium of it, by including himself; and, at the same time, might the more plainly shew that he is here speaking particularly of the Jews.

† The *members*, in which sin works, seem not to be understood *confinedly* of the members

7 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law

sin; (*chap. vi. 13.*) and all the fruit, we thereby brought forth, was so far from being to God and his glory, or to our own good, that it deserved and tended to, and (had not grace prevented) would certainly have issued in our eternal ruin and misery, which, in opposition to an everlasting life of happiness, is justly called *death*. (*Chap. vi. 21, 22.*)

6 But now the law, as a covenant of works, being like the former husband of a wife, (*ver. 2, 3*) dead to us, who heretofore were held in subjection to it, and were under obligations to be dealt with, for life or death, according to it; we, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are delivered from its covenant-demands and rigorous curse, that we might obey and serve God, under a new and better covenant, in our espousals to another husband, even Christ, from new principles and motives, and to new ends, with all freedom and delight in our own souls, as those that are renewed in the spirit of our minds; and in a new life and conversation, all spiritual, holy, and heavenly, by the assistance of the Spirit of God; and not in the old carnal way of regarding only the letter of the law, by a bare external compliance with some, and that principally of its *ritual* precepts, to the neglect of those which are of a moral nature, and which, in the bare letter of it, through our own perverseness, rather provoked, than restrained the corruptions of our hearts.

7 What shall we think then of this account of our former state, as we stood in the relation to the law? Some may say, Doth it not reflect the highest dishonour upon the righteous law of God itself; as if even its moral precepts were the cause of sin, instead of a check to it? I answer, No, by no means; this would be as vile and injurious a thought, and as much to be

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members of the *body*; for several *works of the flesh* are immediately seated in the soul, and in its evil affections; such as idolatry, hatred, wrath, envyings, and the like, *Gal. v. 20, 21.* And yet, perhaps, (see the note on *chap. vii. 6.*) they are called *flesh and members*, because they are excited and influenced by flesh and blood, and the members of the body are the instruments by which they work.

* As *being dead to the law*, *ver. 4.* seems most directly to answer to what the apostle had said, *ver. 1.* about the law's having dominion over a man as long as he lives: So *being delivered from the law*, in this verse, most directly answers to

what had been observed, *ver. 2, 3.* about the wife's being freed from the law of her husband, when he is dead. (See the note on *ver. 4.*) "If this might be explained by a similitude, (says an ingenious and pious writer) I think it is much in the same manner, as the penal laws against the Protestants and dissenters in England are not abolished, but stand in force still; yet have no power to hurt any person, who accepts of the act of toleration, and qualifies himself accordingly: Though there is indeed this difference, that it can never be said, that those penal laws are now, or ever were, either *body*, just, or good, as the law of God is. *Orthodoxy and charity united*, pag. 136.

law had said, *Thou shalt not covet.*

abhorred, as any of the others that have been already confuted: (*chap. vi. 1, &c. and ver. 15, &c.*) Nay, so contrary is this to the excellent nature and proper design of the law, that I myself (to tell you my own former experience) should not have understood some things to be really sinful and condemnable; nor been suitably humbled for them, and brought to see my need of Christ, to save me from them, had it not been for the light and authority of God's holy law, which discovered and forbade them: For, to instance only in one particular, I should never have apprehended, and been convinced in my own conscience, that the secret workings of irregular desires, and the very first motions of inordinate affections, were sins, unless the law had pronounced them to be so, in the tenth commandment, saying, *Thou shalt not covet,* (*Exod. xx. 17.*) which includes a prohibition of all impatience and discontent in our own minds at any disposals of Providence concerning us; all grudging and envying at the prosperity of others; and all inclinations to what God has forbid, and uneasy cravings of any worldly enjoyments which others are possessed of, and he sees fit to deny us: That therefore which thus discovers and forbids all sin, in its first and most secret workings, can never be a friend to it.

8 But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

8 But the truth of the case is, that so far as the law ever proved an occasion of sin to me, the fault lay, not at all in the law itself, but intirely in my own wicked heart: It did not so properly give the occasion, as the corruption of my nature; the sin that reigned in me unworthily took the occasion for it, from the just strictness and severity of the law, and from my own natural enmity to it; and so worked in me all manner of evil inclinations and desires after that which was forbidden by it: For as long as I continued without a true sense of the spirituality and holiness, strictness and extensiveness of the demands of the law *, (which I was afterwards led into

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* It is surprising to me, that the learned Mr Locke, and some others after him, should make the sense of this passage to be *without the law* (meaning the law given by Moses) *sin is dead*, not able to hurt me; or *without the law of Moses*, which annexes death to transgression, *sin is as good as dead*, is not able to have its will of me, and bring death upon me: For this is directly contrary to the apostle's peremptory assertions, (*chap. v. 12, 13, 14.*) that by one man sin entered into the world, and

death by sin; that *sin was in the world until*, or all along before the law; and that *death reigned from Adam to Moses*. How then could it be said, that sin was not able to hurt the apostle, or to bring death upon him, or upon any other Jew, without the law of Moses? Since it had reigned unto death so many hundreds of years before that law was given; and we are told, (*Rom. i. 32.*) that the very heathens, who had only the law of nature, knew the judgment of God, that the transgressors of that law

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

law were worthy of death. I therefore take the sense of this expression, as given in the paraphrase to be equally proper in the construction of the phrase, and much better agreeing with, and countenanced by, all the preceding and following context: And how applicable soever this, and the former part of the next verse, may be to any other Jew, I apprehend that they are to be consider-

ed, not merely as personating the carnal Jews in general, but as descriptive of the apostle's own experience; and that all, which follows to the end of the chapter, is peculiarly so, to exemplify the difference between the law and the gospel, and their different effects upon those that are under them respectively.

9 For in those days of my unregeneracy, I had high swelling thoughts of myself, vainly imagining, that I was in a safe state; and in good terms with God, upon the foot of mine own righteousness; as being then an utter stranger to the true knowledge and discerning of the pure and spiritual meaning, and high requirements of the law, how much soever I was acquainted with the letter of it. But when the divine precept, in all its spirituality and extent, as reaching to the thoughts, principles, views, and desires of the heart, as well as to the words and acts of the life; when it thus came, in the light and energy of the Holy Spirit, to my mind and conscience, in his convincing me of sin; then I saw many things to be sin, which I never thought to be so before; I found it had more power in me than I formerly was aware; I was then fully convinced that, in the righteous judgment of God, the worst of punishment was due to me, for my multiplied transgressions in heart and life, beyond all that I had ever apprehended before; and so sin revived in my conscience, in all its hideous forms, and with terrible accusations of guilt and obnoxiousness to divine wrath; and thereupon all my former vain confidence, and high conceit of myself, died within me; I could no longer support them, nor think myself righteous, but fell under a sentence of death and condemnation in the sense of my own soul, as a man dead in law, and deserving to die eternally.

10 And the righteous law of God, which was a system of holy commandments, given with a promise of life to such as should perfectly obey it, and was originally designed to be a covenant of life, upon performance of its terms and conditions, to them that were under it, saying, *The man which doth those things shall live by them*; (chap. x. 5.) This very law be-

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ed, not merely as personating the carnal Jews in general, but as descriptive of the apostle's own experience; and that all, which follows to the end of the chapter, is peculiarly so, to exemplify the difference between the law and the gospel, and their different effects upon those that are under them respectively.

ing now a broken covenant, and so become *weak through the flesh*, (chap. viii. 3.) I found was so far from being capable of justifying, and giving me a title to life and happiness, that, on the contrary, it condemned and bound me over to death and misery of every kind, both temporal and eternal; and afforded me no remedy.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

11 For my original depravity, being impatient of restraint by the law, took a perverse occasion, from the strictness of the commandments contained in it, to rise up in rebellion against it, as if it were too unreasonable and severe an imposition, to be laid upon human nature; and so beguiling me as the serpent did *Eve*; (Gen. iii. 13.) it ensnared, and insensibly drew me into the commission of many evils which God had forbid, and by this means brought me, still more and more, under the heaviest sentence of condemnation and death: And when afterwards it came home, in its spirituality and power, to my conscience, it slew the high-towering thoughts and confidences which I before had entertained about my own sufficiency to keep it, and my own righteousness to recommend me to God.

12 Wherefore the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

12 Since therefore the moral law thus discovers, forbids, and condemns every sin; and since all its *unhappy* consequences and influence, like those of the sun's shining on a dunghill, are only owing to the froward abuse that is made of it by the corruptions of mankind, it must be acquitted of all blame; and we must own, that the law itself is faultless, as it is the eternal and unchangeable rule and standard of all holiness; and that its direct and natural intent is to encourage and promote it, and cannot but do so, in them, that make a right use of it: And it is all of a piece, like the God whose law it is*; every particular commandment of it is intrinsically pure and holy, just, right and true, good and excellent, every way becoming the holy, righteous, and good God to enjoin, and intelligent creatures to obey, for his glory, and their own advantage.

13 Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me

13 Having thus fully answered the objection against *the law's being sin*, (ver. 7,—12.) perhaps some of you, making a handle of what has been said, (ver. 10.) about *my finding the commandment to be unto death*, may suppose, that I nevertheless make it to be the cause of all the *mischiefs*, that are come upon

NOTE

* It is with inimitable judgment and dexterity, that in all this discourse the apostle soothes, and ingratiates himself with the Jew, by displaying the honour

me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

on mankind, even to eternal death. Was then, do ye think, that which is altogether good in itself, and in its own tendency and design, the real, direct, and proper cause of my being made liable to all misery and ruin? No, (*μη γινωσκο*) this reproachful reflection upon it is as much to be detested as any of the former. But, as ye may see by what has been already offered, it is all owing to sin, which, that it might be discovered to be a most malignant and destructive evil, produced such wicked works in me, by its abuse of the good law of God, as are the only criminal cause of destruction; and so it apparently brought me under a righteous and aggravated sentence of condemnation, as its natural and due desert; that sin, being thus prohibited by, and yet rising up in desperate opposition to, the holy commandment, might be shewn to be so extremely odious, unreasonable, and injurious, above all things else; so directly contrary to God, and his law; and so pernicious to myself, that it wants a word strong enough to express its malignity, and cannot be so justly and fully represented, as by an epithet taken from itself, and so pronouncing it to be above all measure sinful. (*Καὶ υπερβολὴν αμαρτανος.*)

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

14 For, whatever unenlightened minds may think of it, those of us, who have been led into a deep conviction of the evil of sin, in its contrariety to the moral law, are very sure that this is not, like the ceremonial law, a carnal commandment, (Heb. vii. 16.) pertaining only to the body; nor like human laws, which can take no cognizance of crimes, farther than they appear by overt-acts. No, we are thoroughly satisfied, that this excellent law is of a spiritual nature, every way worthy its author, who is a Spirit, and the God of the spirits of all flesh; (John iv. 24. and Numb. xvi. 22.) and that therefore it extends its requirements to the soul, in all its powers and faculties, thoughts and dispositions, principles, motives, and ends; demands internal and spiritual, as well as external and bodily service; and forbids heart sin, as well as every irregularity in the life and conversation; But, alas! to tell you now my present, (ver. 7.—13.) I did my former, experience; after all the renovation in the spirit of my mind, there are still such remainders of indwelling corruption in me, and so many comings short of the spirituality and wide extent of this law, that when I view myself in its pure and holy light, and compare my own heart and ways with the perfection it requires*, I find myself to be

NOTE

* That the apostle here, and in the following verses to the end of the chapter, speaks of himself, with relation to what he found, after he had been re-

in too great measure, carnal still, or, comparatively speaking, but imperfectly renewed; and though I am no longer like that wicked *Abab*, and those idolatrous

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Israelites,

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renewed and called by grace, appears from his changing the *tense*, when he enters upon this branch of his discourse. Wherein he spoke, in the former part of the chapter, of what he was before conversion; he now all along speaks of himself in the *present tense*, with regard to what he experienced, after he was converted, in the struggles that passed in his soul, between the remainders of inward corruption, and the principle of grace, which was wrought in him. Accordingly, in relating this conflict, from the beginning to the end, he speaks of two contrary principles, in such a manner, as to distinguish his renewed self from sin, that dwelt in him, and personifies sin and grace, under the character of two *I's*, as though they were two different persons in him. (ver. 15.—19.) One of these he calls, *the law of sin in his members, the flesh*, and *the sin that dwelt in him*; and the other, *his mind, the law of his mind, and the inner man*. (ver. 20, 21, 23, 25.) And the strongest expressions he uses, to set forth the power of the sinful principle, such as his *being sold under sin, brought into captivity to the law of his members, and serving the law of sin with the flesh*, (ver. 14, 23, 25.) are by no means inconsistent with a regenerate state, if we consider them, which the turn of his expressions intimates we should) as relating, not to the general course of his life, but only to some particular acts, and to a sort of involuntary subjection, on some occasions, and at some certain seasons, through the ruling or willing of the flesh against the spirit, which he elsewhere represents to be the case in true believers themselves, (ver. v. 17. But the high things he mentions of his habitually *disallowing* and *hating the evil which he did*, inasmuch as it was not so properly *he himself* that did it, but *sin that dwelt in him*; and of his *consenting to the law that it was good, delighting in it after the inner man, and serving it with the mind*; so that he himself served it, his understanding, will, and affections, every faculty of his soul, were set with a holy bias towards it. (ver. 15, 16, 17, 22, 25.) All this is much more than can be justly said of any unregenerate man whatsoever, whose judgment and conscience draw him one way, while his will and affections

draw another, in his conflicts with sin; but the approbation of his mind; the consent of his will, and the delight of his affections are never *habitually and unitedly* set for that which is good: Nor do the apostle's groanings under the body of sin, and for deliverance from it, together with his thankful confidence of *deliverance through Jesus Christ*, (ver. 24, 25.) agree to any, but those that have the grace of God in truth. We may add to all this, what to me, though not observed, as far as I find, by any expositors, is a decisive evidence, that in these verses the apostle speaks of himself as *regenerate*; viz. that the *style* he here uses is entirely different from that, in which he speaks of unregenerate men, in the foregoing and following context. There he represents them, as *obeying sin in the lusts thereof, as yielding themselves servants to obey it, and their members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity*; (chap. vi. 12, 13, 16, 19.) as being *in the flesh, when the motions of sin, which were by the law, worked in their members to bring forth fruit unto death*; (chap. vii. 5.) as being *after the flesh, and carnally minded*; and as *minding the things of the flesh, and walking after the flesh*, and having such *enmity against God*, that they neither were, nor could be *subject to his law, or please him*. (Chap. viii. 5.—8.) But nothing of this kind occurs in the account he here gives of himself. Let therefore any one attentively and impartially read and compare the several parts of these chapters; and then judge, whether there be not many of the terms, under which the apostle speaks of himself in this chapter, from the 14th verse to the end, that can never be reconciled to his own description of an unregenerate man, in those other passages; and whether they may not be all fairly reconciled to the opposite descriptions, which he there intermingles of believers, as *yielding themselves to God, and obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them, as being spiritually minded, and minding the things of the spirit, and walking after the spirit*, and the like, in the most prevailing bent of their hearts, and general course of their lives.

Israelites, who voluntarily *fold themselves to do evil*; (1 Kings xxi. 20. and 2 Kings xvii. 17.) yet, against my own will, I am sometimes carried into captivity to sin unawares, (*ver. 23.*) by its secret and treacherous workings, under the power of temptation; and instead of being a free servant of sin, I at such seasons am rather like a slave, who has been sold into the hands of that detestable tyrant, by the fall of my first father and covenant-head, and by my own former consent; the effects of which I still feel, at times with sad regret.

13 For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

15 For I am now far from allowing myself in any of the violations of God's law, which, through infirmity, temptation and surprise, I sometimes may be guilty of in thought, word, or deed; my settled judgment and purpose, and all the discrepancy of my feelings are against them; and I never go into them with deliberate choice: For the duties, that I propose to myself, in the governing views of life, and that would be found in the constant practice of, I too often, through inadvertence, sloth, and indolence, am prone to neglect, and do not perform, in so spiritual and perfect a manner, as I sincerely desire to do; but on the other hand, the sins, that I habitually and determinately have the utmost abhorrence of, and at times, my warmest indignation is raised against, at other times, to my great grief and humbling before God, am insensibly drawn into.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good.

16 If then whatsoever I do, that is contrary to the holy law of God, is what I have a supreme and settled aversion to, and my mind and will are habitually turned against; this evidently shews me to be far renewed, as that I, in my very heart, am at full agreement with the law, and, like *David*, (*Psal. cxix. 128.*) *esteem all its precepts*, in whatever it commands, or forbids, *concerning all things to be right*; and that (*συμφωνῶ*) I give my vote for it, and thoroughly approve of it, as a most excellent rule of righteousness, which requires nothing, but what is altogether worthy of God to enjoin, and fit and good for me to observe, in every instance whatsoever.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

17 Now the plain and natural inference from this is, that, through the change, which divine grace has made in me, it is no longer my whole self; much less is it my renewed judgment, will, and affection, which are now most properly myself; nor is it still as a willing and approving agent, that at any time transgresses the law, either by sins of omission, or commission; but every thing of this kind is the fruit of the corruption of nature, which I disavow; and which, like the *Canaanites* in the land of *Israel* (*Num.*

(Numb. xxxiii. 55.) still dwells in me, contrary to my own will, and is, at times, exceeding troublesome, and too hard for me.

15 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

18 For I know, by sad experience, that in me (my meaning is, that in my corrupt nature, as considered in itself, or so far forth, as it still remains not fully subdued) no spiritually good thing has any place or residence; all that I have of this sort proceeds from that better principle, which I received by renewing grace: For, under the influence of this grace, my will is so entirely set towards all goodness and holiness, that its main bias stands ready for it, and makes it the matter of its fixed purpose and choice: But, alas! there are times and seasons, when, through the power of remaining corruption, and concurring temptations, and for want of a due presence of mind, and lively exercise of faith, I do not find a vigorous activity in my soul, to execute my best resolutions for performing holy duties, and doing good, at least not in that spiritual manner, and to that degree of eminence, as I sincerely desire to do.

19 For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

19 For though I am, through mercy, kept from gross sins, and am helped, in the general course of my conduct, to have an unfeigned respect to all God's commands; yet, as I said before, (*ver. 15, 16.*) I do not, in fact, perform all the good, by an universal conformity and obedience to the law, which I aim at, labour after, and should be glad continually to abound in: But in many things I still offend, (*Jam. iii. 2.*) and too frequently fall into such sins of infirmity, in unguarded moments, as I am really averse to, and would by no means indulge.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

20 Now if, as is the truth of my case, I sometimes, in fact, do such evil things, as the full bent and inclination of my will is, upon judgment and deliberation, habitually set against, I must insist upon it, to the glory of God's grace in me; to the reputation of his law, as holy, just, and good; and to the reproach of sin, as it is an unreasonable violation of that faultless and excellent rule of righteousness, that it is not still, as it formerly was, I myself, that knowingly and willingly do the abominable things which God hates; but it is owing to the unnatural force, I am sometimes under from the workings of that principle of sin, which I must own, to the humbling of my soul before God, still remains in me, and is not opposed, watched, prayed and laboured against, so much as it ought to be by me; so that were I to say, *that I have no sin, I should deceive myself, and the truth would not be in me.* (1 John i. 8.)

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.

23 But

24 I therefore (as) find, by woful experience*, an evil principle still working in me, which though it be in a crucified state, that it may be destroyed; (chap. vi. 6.) yet it sometimes so far revives, and exerts itself, like a law, by suggesting sinful things, and proposing such allurements of sensitive ease, pleasure and worldly advantages, to draw me into its vile design; and by starting such discouragements, from persecution, reproaches, and unbelieving jealousies about the excellence and reality of spiritual and invisible things, to deter me from forsaking and quitting its evil ways, and from resolutely pursuing religious sentiments and practices; that when I fain would be doing that, which is pleasing in the sight of God, and conformable to his holy law, indwelling sin is so near me, (ἡμεῖς παροικεῖται) that some bad motion too often, presents itself immediately, to oppose and hinder my acting up to, and accomplishing the unfeigned and earnest desire of my heart; and leads me into one or another transgression unawares.

25 I can truly say, that I have the greatest complacency, and the noblest satisfaction, in all the pure and spiritual precepts of God's law, as right and good, and as what I take the highest pleasure in obeying, according to the prevailing sense of all the powers of my soul †, and so far as they are renewed.

26 But

27 I therefore (as) find, by woful experience*, an evil principle still working in me, which though it be in a crucified state, that it may be destroyed; (chap. vi. 6.) yet it sometimes so far revives, and exerts itself, like a law, by suggesting sinful things, and proposing such allurements of sensitive ease, pleasure and worldly advantages, to draw me into its vile design; and by starting such discouragements, from persecution, reproaches, and unbelieving jealousies about the excellence and reality of spiritual and invisible things, to deter me from forsaking and quitting its evil ways, and from resolutely pursuing religious sentiments and practices; that when I fain would be doing that, which is pleasing in the sight of God, and conformable to his holy law, indwelling sin is so near me, (ἡμεῖς παροικεῖται) that some bad motion too often, presents itself immediately, to oppose and hinder my acting up to, and accomplishing the unfeigned and earnest desire of my heart; and leads me into one or another transgression unawares.

28 I can truly say, that I have the greatest complacency, and the noblest satisfaction, in all the pure and spiritual precepts of God's law, as right and good, and as what I take the highest pleasure in obeying, according to the prevailing sense of all the powers of my soul †, and so far as they are renewed.

29 But

NOTES.

* By this law the apostle seems to mean the corrupt principle, which inclines to all evil, in opposition to the law of God, and to a principle of grace in the heart; and which may be called a law, because it prescribes contrary rules of conduct, and enforces them by powerful motives, such as the sensitive rewards or punishments of complying, or not complying with it; and so operates, after the manner of a law, in its influence to the doing of evil.

† This phrase, *the inner man*, I think is found in none of the sacred writings, but in those of our apostle; and is used but twice more in all the New Testament. Once in 2 Cor. iv. 16. where he speaks of the *inward man's* being renewed day by day; and again, in Eph. iii. 16. where he prays that the *Ephesians* might be strengthened with might by the *spirit in the inner man*. And in both these places it has a manifest reference to *believers*; and seems to point us, not only to the renewings and strengthenings of their minds, and all the inmost powers of their souls, but likewise to the further advancement of that good work, which was already begun in them, as

they were before supposed to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit; and so, though the *inner man*, primarily signifies the *soul*, it, in the apostle's use of it, takes in also the idea of a *renewed soul*, and answers to what he, at other times, calls the *new man*. (Eph. iv. 24. and Col. iii. 10.) And what is this? but the effect of God's gracious covenant-promise to his people, that he would put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. (Jer. xxxi. 33.) When therefore the apostle speaks of his *delighting in the law of God after the inner man*, it intimates, that the inmost bent and bias of his heart was set towards it, which is the character of true believers, who are abundantly described in the *Psalms*, as those that love the law of God, and delight in his commandments: Whereas the *inward parts* of unregenerate sinners are represented to be full of wickedness, *Psal. v. 9.* and *Luke xi. 39.*; and, in our apostle's description, he tells us, *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* (Rom. vii. 7. See the note on ver. 14. of this chapter.) But how is it possible that this

should

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

23 But, alas! as I am still in an imperfect state, after all my attainments in Christianity, I find, by lamentable experience*, a remaining principle of corruption, which has a powerful influence, like a law in my sensitive passions and appetites, and which, like a body, consisting of many parts, exerts itself chiefly in, and by the members of the natural body; and wages war against the holy and approved light and propensions of my judgment and will, which, like a superior law written in my heart, has the more stated predominancy in me; and yet sometimes, when I am left to myself, and am under the power of temptation, that sinful principle prevails so far, as to draw me aside, and make me an unwilling captive, at such seasons†, to that law of sin, which as I said but now, chiefly operates in, and by the members of my body.

24 This is a deplorable consideration; it is my heaviest burden, and costs me many a groan, in my serious reflections upon it. O vile and miserable man that I am, as in myself considered, on this account! Who shall set me free from this body of sin‡, which I still carry about with me, and from its dreadful consequences, which deserves and tends to death and ruin, and will continue to work in me, as long as I dwell

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should consist with *delighting in the law of God, after the inner man*? It is indeed said of Herod, that he heard John the Baptist gladly; (Mark vi. 20.) and of the Jews, that they rejoiced for a season in his sight, and heard Christ gladly. (John v. 35. and Mark xii. 37.) And it is said of some temporary believers, that they heard the word, and anon with joy received it. (Matth. xiii. 20.) But all this is to be understood of a delight in some good news or pleasing tidings, which they apprehended were brought to them; but not of a delight in the moral law, as holy, just, and good: And even this delight was only from some present superficial stirrings in their affections, which were struck with pleasure, at the hearing of what they took to be agreeable to their interests, of one kind or other, while the governing temper of their hearts lay against all that is truly holy, and spiritually good; and so could not be called, with any propriety, their *delighting in the law of God, after the inner man*, or in their very heart and soul.

* The apostle having, in this and the preceding chapter, represented the corruption of nature, under the figure of the old man, the body of sin, and the

flesh, here speaks of its efforts in various forms by means of the body, and sensitive affections, and of temptations arising from thence, as the law of his members, in opposition to the new man, or that spiritual principle of grace and holiness, which subsisted, and ruled with full consent, in his soul; and is here called the law of his mind.

† Though this great apostle was eminent in grace and holiness, and was, doubtless, continually improving in them; yet, several years after this, he freely owned, (Phil. iii. 12.) that he had not already attained, nor was already perfect: Which intimates, that his victories over sin, and his advancements in faith, love, and obedience, were imperfect, or not, even then, so complete as he wished for, and aimed at.

‡ By the body of this death, or this body of death, the apostle might mean, either the body of sin, which tended to death; or his fleshy body, which became mortal by reason of sin; (chap. viii. 10.) and in which original corruption was so interwoven, that, like the fretting leprosy under the law, (Lev. xiv. 44, 45.) it could never be perfectly purged out, till the earthly house of this tabernacle itself should be pulled down.

dwelt in mortal flesh, and which, unless I were some way delivered from it, would certainly issue in my everlasting destruction? While I look into myself, and into the holy law of God; and observe how contrary the workings of corruption in me are to its strict requirements, I am under the greatest discouragement, and have indeed the highest reason to despair of salvation by any works of my own.

25 I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

25 But, blessed be God, I am already delivered by his free favour*, and the operation of his grace in me, from the guilt and dominion of sin; and have well grounded hopes of complete deliverance, in consequence thereof, at the dissolution of this mortal frame, from all its workings and remainders in me, through the obedience, sufferings, and advocacy of Jesus Christ, my Lord, and yours, who believe in him. So then, to sum up all in a few words, in my settled judgment and choice, as I am renewed by grace, I myself (*αυτος εγω*) with full approbation, resolution, and consent, devote the whole man to God, and yield an unfeigned, and unreserved obedience to his law, as his willing servant, without objecting against any part of it: But so far, and so far only, as there are still disallowed workings of corruption in me, I sometimes am thereby brought under the power of propensions to sin, and into an unwilling servitude to its abominable interests and demands.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How excellent is the *moral* law, as the rule of our obedience! In this view of it, it is unchangeable and everlastingly binding, and is fit and worthy to be so: For it is all holy, just, and good, and reaches to the thoughts of the heart, as well as to the actions of the life: It discovers and strictly forbids every sin, and stands clear of all charges of defect, or of being the cause of sin, or death; though the corruption of human nature takes occasion, from its purity and strictness, to rise up with the greater rebellion against it. But how monstrously iniquitous is this; and how impetuous are the workings of sin, in those that are strangers to renewing grace! It is utterly impatient of restraint; but brings the transgressor under a righteous sentence of condemnation and death; and is so abominably evil, that no words can so well paint out its proper deformity, as to call it *exceeding sinful*. How different are the sinner's thoughts of his own state God-ward before, and after he beholds himself in the glass of the law! He is alive in his own conceit without the law; overlooks his own defects and provocations, especially heart sins; and is full of himself, and fearless of the wrath of God: But when the commandments come to his conscience, in the light and power of the Spirit, all his vain contentences die within him: He then sees himself to be guilty and law-condemned, and to be liable to, and deserving of, eternal death, and utterly incapable of being justified.

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* Several Greek copies, and several versions of good credit read, *the grace of God*, *χαρις του Θεου* instead of *I thank God*, *ευχαριστω το Θεο*. Vid. Mill. in loc. And as the apostle undoubtedly had his eye upon *grace*, as the spring of his relief and hope, in opposition to what might be expected from the law; and these words are a direct answer to the foregoing question; the *grace* or favour of God must be, at least, included in his design, when he says, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

tified by the righteousness of his own. And, O how happy is it not to be under the law, as a covenant of works! It was indeed ordained for life, in case of perfect obedience to it; but it is impossible for us, in our fallen state, to perform the righteousness it requires, as the condition of life; and yet it is exceeding strict and unyielding in its demands, and terribly rigorous in its curse for every disobedience. But they, that believe in Jesus, are as dead to this covenant as if they had never been under it; and are as much delivered from it as a wife is from the law of her dead husband. And as a woman may marry another man without incurring the guilt of adultery, after, though not before, her first husband is dead: So God, by the constitution of the new covenant, has espoused believers to Christ, not to acquit them of their natural obligations to the law of their creation, but to free them from its curse for their transgressions of it; and to engage and enable them, by virtue derived from their second living husband, to bring forth fruits of holiness to the praise and glory of God, that they may serve him in newness of the Spirit, and not in the way of merely external performances. But, alas! How great is the remainder of corruption in God's own people! They are still in some degree carnal; and are too often, though not with their full consent and approbation, carried into bondage and captivity to sin; and, so far as they are unrenewed, no good thing dwells in them: For when they are left to themselves, and are under the power of temptation, they do not find such a readiness to perform good duties as they ought, and would; but are, at times, betrayed into the commission of sins which they hate and disallow of; and into the omission of duties which they would fain be constantly practising: And even when good desires and purposes are in their minds, they are sometimes troubled with the counter-actings of evil thoughts, which hinder their steady and effectual pursuits, and executions of their noblest designs for God and religion. O how directly contrary is all this to the settled principles and dispositions of their holy souls! Their inmost, habitual, and most governing sense and inclinations are entirely on the side of God's holy law, which they heartily consent to, approve of, and delight in, as every way right and fit; so that they can truly say, It is not they themselves, as Christians and renewed, but the remainder of indwelling sin, that is the spring of it; that they themselves, with their whole souls, sincerely serve the law of God, and would gladly do it in every instance whatsoever! And that it is only so far forth as they are unrenewed, that they at any time act a contrary part, under a sort of force, in serving the law of sin. But how distressing are these workings of sin in them! They are the greatest burden of their lives, and cost them many a sigh and groan; and make them earnestly long and pray for deliverance. And how reviving are the hopes of relief in Christ against this worst of evils, and this greatest sorrow of their hearts! Were it not for this, they would think themselves wretched to an overwhelming. But O how supporting and comforting is the thought of that freedom, which they already have from the guilt and reign of sin, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and of that entire and everlasting deliverance which they shall consequently have from all remainders of it hereafter! Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, and for this hope of a perfect and sinless state through him.

C H A P. VIII.

The apostle sets forth the freedom of believers from condemnation, and their real character, by which they may be distinguished from all others, 1,—8. Their privileges in having the Spirit of Christ, as their principle of life, their guide and witnesser, and in being the children of God, and heirs of glory, 9,—17. The comfort of their hopeful prospects under all present tribulations, 18,—25. Their assistance from the Spirit in prayer, 26, 27. Their interest in the love of God, as the original spring of all their blessings, 28,—30. And their triumph, through Christ, over all the enemies of their salvation, 31,—39.

TEXT.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore *, as I have shewn at large, (*chap. iii. 21. &c. and chap. iv. v. vi.*) and but now expressed my joy in it, (*chap. vii. 24.*) the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, delivers all true believers from the guilt and dominion of sin; in order to his freeing them, in due time, from all remainders of it; We may hence assuredly conclude, that there is now at present, even in this imperfect world, no sentence of law-condemnation standing out against them, that are vitally united to Christ, and become members of his mystical body, through faith in him: They may humbly rejoice in this, that being thus in Christ, as their head and husband, the curse of the law is actually reversed, on his account, as to them, who, though attended with many bewailed and condemnable infirmities, are distinguished from mere professors, by their acting, in the general and governing course of their lives and conversation, not according to the dictates and inclinations of corrupt nature, for gratifying the flesh; but according to the written word, which was indited by the Spirit; as also according to the spiritual principle, which was wrought in them by regenerating grace; and according to the suggestions, guidance, and assistances of the Spirit himself, and agreeable to his holy nature and will.

2 For the law of the

2 For † as the moral law was in Christ, the appointed

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* The particle (*aga*) *therefore*, plainly shews, that this is an inference from something that had been said before; and it seems to be most immediately from the last verse of the seventh chapter, where the apostle thanks God for deliverance, through Jesus Christ, from the guilt and reigning power of sin. But, as that thought was founded upon his main argument, which he had pursued in the foregoing chapters, about the

believer's being justified freely by God's grace, through faith in the righteousness of Christ, and being enabled on that principle to live to God, we may carry our view back, not only to the immediately preceding verse, but likewise to his whole discourse on those heads, as the premises, from which he drew this conclusion.

† As the apostle in this verse, and this only from the beginning to the end of

the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

nointed Saviour's heart; and he, according to covenant-engagements with the Father, on behalf of his people, completely satisfied it, by his obedience and sufferings, in their room and stead, under the conduct and assistance of that Divine Spirit, who is life itself, and is an animating principle wherever he dwells, and worked powerfully in the human nature of Christ, to invigorate him in the whole of his mediatorial performances on earth, and then raised him from the dead; the righteousness of the law, which Christ thus fulfilled, being made over through faith, by the gracious constitution of the gospel, which is established in

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him,

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of the chapter, alters his style, and speaks again in the *first person singular*, as he had all along in the latter part of the preceding chapter; he seems here to refer back to the thanks he had offered to God, through Jesus Christ, for his deliverance from the body of death, in the close of that discourse. (ver. 24.) But among the various interpretations, I have met with, of this phrase, *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, it is difficult fully to adjust any of them to the direct scope of the apostle's argument, in this and the two following verses, which evidently is, to support his assertion, (ver. 1.) that there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. It may possibly give some light to the passage before us, if we consider, that by the law, in the apostle's style, is often meant the works, and the righteousness of the law performed in obedience to it. Thus the law, and the righteousness of the law, are with him terms of much the same import, in the two next verses; (ver. 3. 4.) and so are keeping the law, and keeping the righteousness of the law, chap. ii. 25, 26. following after the law of righteousness, and seeking righteousness by the works of the law, (chap. ix. 31, 32.) and being justified by the law, and justified by the deed, or by the works of the law. (Chap. iii. 20. and Gal. ii. 16. compared with Gal. iii. 11. and v. 4.) According to this sense of the word, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, signifies his obedience to the law, which was in his heart, (Psal. xl. 8.) which obedience he, as man, was fitted for, assisted in, and carried through, by the Holy Spirit, by whose immediate operation his human nature was that holy thing, which was born of the virgin, (Luke i. 35.) and by whose anointing above measure, our Lord went about doing good, (Acts i. 38.) and offered himself without

spot to God; (Heb. ix. 14.) And he may be called the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, because, by his joint agency with the Father and Son, the body of Christ was raised from the dead to immortal life; and because he is a quickening spirit to all that are in Christ, and will raise their mortal bodies to eternal life, as it follows in our context, ver. 10, 11. Now, though the law, here spoken of, may, perhaps, have some reference to the eternal covenant between the Father and Son, which was as a law to Christ, in his mediatorial capacity; yet as it may not be very easy to conceive, how this should be called the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and as the engagement, which Christ came under by the law of mediation, was to fulfil the moral law, in the room and stead of his people; I would rather understand it of the moral law, as fulfilled by him; and this makes the sense of the term law most uniform in the whole argument here, and in the two following verses; and gives an harmonious view of it, in all its parts, with full strength and force. But if by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus should be meant, as some have thought, the dispensation, or doctrine of grace, as exhibited in the gospel; or if, as others apprehend, the spirit of life, signifies life itself, according to the use of this phrase in Rev. xi. 11.; and so the law of the spirit of life in Christ denotes the powerful operation of this life, which is spoken of as a law in him, in opposition to the workings of the law of sin and death in us; both these senses, as well that which refers to the law of mediation, may be understood in a manner very consistent with what, if I mistake not, is principally intended; and therefore, though I prefer this, as making the argument most of a piece, I have not wholly excluded those.

him, and becomes effectual, through the quickening influences of his Spirit, has discharged me from the condemning power of sin, which rendered me obnoxious to eternal death; and, in consequence thereof, it has delivered me from the dominion of every iniquity; and, at the dissolution of this mortal frame, will entirely rid me of all the workings and indwellings of corruption, which I groan under, while I am here in the body. And this happy privilege is not peculiar to me, as an apostle; but equally belongs to all of us that believe.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh:

3 For as the law, under the form of a covenant of works, made perfect obedience the condition of life, and pronounced a curse for every sin; it was impossible that any transgressor should ever be justified, or acquitted from condemnation by its tenor, or by his own fulfilling the righteousness it required: But that which was impossible for the law to do, (*το αδυνατον του νομου*) not from any defect in itself, *which is holy, just, and good*, and still the same, as when it was first *ordained to life*, (chap. vii. 10, 12.) and is as able to justify a sinless man as ever; but which it could not do, through the impediment, that arises from the corruption of nature, as this has brought us under guilt, and rendered us utterly insufficient to answer its just demands; and so has made us incapable subjects of its absolving and justifying sentence, by virtue of any thing found in us: This impossible thing to the law, God, in his infinite wisdom and grace, has done in another way, by sending into our world, his own dear and essential Son, (*το ουιον ουν*) who assumed human nature into personal union with himself; so that he was *God manifested in the flesh*; (1 Tim. iii. 16.) and was truly *made of a woman, and made under the law*, (Gal. iv. 4.) and *that in such a low condition**, as carried a resemblance of the sinful state, into which we were fallen, though he really had no sin of his own: And being thus sent to do honour in our nature to the law, and answer the great designs of divine love to us, God, by the atoning sacrifice which he offered†, shewed his just and unyielding abhorrence of sin, and both passed and executed a judicial sentence against it, in the penal sufferings

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* Christ appeared in the likeness of *Luke ii. 22.*) baptism, and reproachful sinful flesh, as he was attended with all the natural human infirmities of infancy and weakness, pain and poverty, hunger and thirst, mortality and death, which are the fruits of sin; and with external appearances of depravity in his circumcision, legal purification, (see the note on

sufferings under the curse of the law.

† For sin (*της αναγιας*) is the very phrase in the *septuagint*, by which the *sin-offerings*, that were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, were usually expressed. See a great many instances of this in *Whitby* on the place.

ferings, that Christ, as our substitute, endured in his crucified flesh, when *he his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree*; (1 Pet. ii. 24.) and so God condemned sin in him, by inflicting the punishment due to it upon him;

4. To the end that (as) the whole righteousness* demanded by the holy and broken law, in suffering its curse, as well as in obeying its precepts, might be filled up by our public head and representative, in our nature, and in our room and stead; and so might be deemed, in *legal* estimation, to be fulfilled for, and by those of us, who are believers, not in name and notion only, but in sincerity and truth; or who, as I said before, (ver. 1.) and now repeat it, because of its vast importance to prevent self-deceivings, have our stated and habitual conversation in the world toward God and man, not according to the principles of

NOTE.

* The righteousness of the law evidently means the righteousness required by the moral law: As it unquestionably does, when the apostle speaks of the Gentiles keeping the righteousness of the law, (chap. ii. 26.) which is the only place besides, where this phrase (*το δίκαιον του νομου*) is used. The moral law must likewise needs be included at least, when in a kindred phrase, he says (chap. x. 5.) *Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law*, (*το δίκαιον του νομου*) that the man which doth those things shall live by them. Accordingly it is here spoken of, as that righteousness of the law, which is necessary to free us from condemnation; and the sins against which were condemned in the flesh of Christ: And this righteousness's being fulfilled in us, or by, or for us, as the preposition (*εἰς*) sometimes signifies, and is rendered, *by* and *for*, (Matth. v. 34. and vi. 7. and Heb. i. 1.) seems by the turn of the expression, and the nature of the argument in hand, to refer to the righteousness, which was wrought out by Christ, as our Head and surety, for us, and is imputed for justification to us, through faith in him, as if it had been wrought out by ourselves, rather than to a righteousness, that is personally fulfilled, or filled up by us, as this word (*πληρωθη*) signifies; and it is the same word that is used concerning Christ's fulfilling the law: (Matth. v. 17.) For as the law is said to be *weak through the flesh*, (ver. 3.) so we cannot be properly said to fulfil the righteousness of the law by our own imperfect, though sincere obedience to its precepts; much

less to give satisfaction to its threatenings, both of which go into the righteousness that a broken law demands: But Christ did the first of these for believers, by his obedience, and the last, by his death, when *sin was condemned in his flesh*. And if we here take the preposition (*εἰς*) to signify instead of, as our grammarians and lexicographers tell us it is sometimes used, the sense will be, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled by Christ instead of us. However, it would be directly contrary to the whole design of the apostle's argument, to suppose that either obedience were to be performed, or satisfaction to be made to the law, by believers themselves for their justification, or to free them from condemnation: And yet he, at the same time, maintains the necessity of personal obedience to the moral law, by his adding, at the close of this verse, and insisting upon it in several following verses, that this privilege belongs only to them, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, which secures that point as much, as if he had intended to say, that the end of what Christ did was, that they might, in their own persons, fulfil the righteousness of the law, as far as they might be capable of it in this life; for that is, in effect, the same thing with *walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, which the apostle here makes to be the distinguishing character of them in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, just as he had before of them, to whom there is now no condemnation, on account of their being in Christ, (ver. 1.)

For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace;

of corrupt nature, which, to our grief, still remain in us; but according to those higher and nobler principles, that are implanted in our hearts, and are continually maintained and assisted, by the Spirit of God; and that are agreeable to his mind and will, and to the rule which he has given us in his inspired word, as also to the settled inclination and temper of our renewed souls: These, and none but these are vitally in Christ; and so freed from condemnation through him.

5 For, whatever our profession be, as to those that are still under the direction, power, and dominion of corrupt principles; they (*φάρυσι*) habitually consult and relish, pursue and take pleasure in such worldly, sensual, and sinful things, as are agreeable to their carnal, unrenewed appetites, and may be styled *the works of the flesh*: (Gal. v. 19.) But, on the contrary, as to those that are under the guidance, influence, and dominion of the Holy Spirit, and of the gracious principles which he infused into them in their regeneration; they (*φάρυσι*) think of, and are addicted to, contrive and relish, follow after, and delight in those things, that are of a spiritual and heavenly nature, agreeable to their renewed inclinations, and according to the dictates of the divine Spirit. And it is plain, that not the first, but only the last of these sorts of persons are united to Christ, as true believers, and are the happy subjects of freedom from condemnation by him:

6 For to have the prevailing bent, bias, and delight of the mind and heart turned to sensual, worldly, and sinful objects*, and to live and act accordingly, is, in its own nature, a spiritual death in trespasses and sins, which deserves, tends to, and persisted in, will certainly issue in eternal death: But to have our minds frequently, complacently, intently, and transformingly employed about spiritual things, under the dominion of the Holy Ghost, and of spiritual principles, is itself a spiritual life, which fills the soul with the sweetest serenity and peace; and in the nature of things, and by the gracious constitution of the gospel, it tends to, and is the beginning and earnest of, everlasting life and peace in the enjoyment of the blessed God, and will certainly issue in it. This can never be said of any one, that is in a carnal unregenerate state:

7 Because

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* To be carnally minded (*το σαρικὰ νοεῖν*) is the same expression in the Greek that is rendered in the next verse *the carnal mind*, and signifies the counsel, wisdom, affection, and desire of the flesh, and the like; And so to be spi-

ritually minded (*το πνευματικὰ νοεῖν*) bears a sense opposite to the other; and both these expressions correspond to what was called, *minding or favouring the things of the flesh*, and *the things of the Spirit*, ver. 5.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

7 Because the whole bent and disposition of the carnal heart, which is set upon earthly things, as its chief and chosen good, stands in direct opposition to the blessed and holy God; to his perfections, authority, and government; to the revelation he has made of his mind and will; and to a conformity to him, and a spiritual enjoyment of him: It is not only disinclined and averse to him, but is downright enmity itself against him, under every consideration of him, that does not comport with, but would lay a restraint upon its pride and passions, or its depraved temper and interests, pleasures and designs, in any instance whatsoever: For such is its desperate malignity, and unyielding contrariety to the good and holy law of God, that it will by no means be brought into a subjection to his authority therein, or into a compliance with its spiritual and righteous demands; nor indeed has it any principles or dispositions of its own, that can be turned that way; the heart itself must be changed, by renewing grace, before it can be reconciled, or brought over to God.

8 So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.

8 So then, it clearly follows from all this, that they who are in a state of nature, under the power and dominion of carnal principles, and corrupt affections, are utterly unable of themselves, and while they continue in that state, to do any thing that is spiritually good, and pleasing in the sight of God: (see the paraphrase on chap. vii. 5.) And therefore they cannot, in any consistence with his holy nature and will, and with the honour of his law and government, be so in Christ, as to be discharged from the condemning sentence of the law, and accepted of God to eternal life.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

9 But I am persuaded better things of you, brethren, though I thus speak: (*Heb. vi. 9.*) Ye are not under the dominion of corrupt nature, though there be lamented and opposed remainders of it still with you: But ye are under the prevalent guidance and government of the Holy Spirit, and of a spiritual and gracious principle, which he has wrought in you; because he has taken up an abiding residence in you, as in his temple, by way of special relation, and peculiar manifestation and influence*; and it is undoubtedly true, that ye are regenerated and ruled by this Divine Spirit, in case he thus really dwells in you,

N O T E.

* The particle, (*εἰ*) if so be, might have been justly rendered, because the Spirit of God dwells in you; and so may be considered rather as a note of confidence, than of doubt, concerning the Spirit of God's dwelling in them,

whom the apostle had spoke of. (*chap. i. 7, 8.*) as believers, that were beloved of God, and called to be saints. See *Blackwall's sacred classics*, Vol. II. p. 103. However, I have taken in both senses.

you, as I trust he doth. But (2d) if, after all, there should be any of you, that is not partaker of the renewing and sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost, who is as properly the Spirit of the Son *, as of the Father, I must be so faithful as to tell you plainly, that, be such a person's pretences what they will, he is not united to Christ, as a member of his mystical body, through faith in him; he is not a child in his family by adoption and the new birth; he is not a subject of his kingdom by the conquests of his grace; nor has he any claim to his care of him, as his property and charge for eternal salvation; and, if he lives and dies in his present condition, Christ will not own him for *his*, nor adjudge him to eternal life, as such, at the last day.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.

10 On the contrary, If Christ by his Spirit has taken up his abode in you, as in those that are united to him; your bodies indeed are still mortal, and will certainly die, as well as other mens, by reason of the first transgression, which has subjected all mankind to corporal death, according to the sentence which God pronounced upon them in *Adam*, their public head; (*Gen. iii. 19.*) and because of the remainder of sin which still abides in you, and prevents the repeal of that part of the sentence, which relates merely to temporal death, till, in a sinless state, mortality shall be swallowed up of life: Nevertheless, your souls are already made spiritually alive, and shall live in glory and blessedness for ever, on account of the righteousness of Christ; because it is wrought out for you, and imputed to you, to deliver you from condemnation, and from the second death; and by means of that principle of true holiness, which is implanted in you to enable you to live to God here, and to make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light hereafter.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

11 And (2d) as to your *bodies* themselves, they shall not always lie in the rotting grave, as though death were to have an everlasting dominion over them; and it were never to be turned into a blessing to them, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and in union with Christ: No, if the eternal Spirit of God the Father, who by his almighty agency, and in concurrence with him, raised up the dead body of Jesus the Saviour, from the sepulchre †; if this Divine Spirit

N O T E.

* *The Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ*, are here used promiscuously, as terms of the same import, to intimate, that Christ, as well as the Father, is God; and that the Holy Spirit as essen-

tially belongs to, and is as inseparable from the Son, as from the Father himself, he being as much the Spirit of the one as of the other of those divine persons. † The Father, Son, and Spirit, are

Spirit dwells in you by peculiar relation, and by quickening and sanctifying operation; he who raised up the anointed head of the church, as their representative, and as the *first-fruits of them that sleep* in him, (1 Cor. xv. 20.) will as certainly, in conformity to Christ's resurrection, and in virtue thereof, raise your dead bodies from the grave, at the last day, to a glorious and immortal life, by the same omnipotent energy of his Spirit, who has taken up a gracious and everlasting abode in you; and so the risen head and all his members shall be completely glorified together in the heavenly world.

11 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

12 Therefore, my dear brethren in Christ, as all mischief and ruin is owing to sin, and all the good we have, and hope for, is conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit; we certainly can be under no obligation to the law of sin, which is in our members, nor have any reasonable inducement to follow its pernicious motions, or yield obedience to its unrighteous demands: *For what fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? The end of those things, as I have already observed, is death.* (Chap. vi. 21.) But we are under the highest obligations to the good Spirit of God; and have the strongest motives to live answerable to his holy dictates.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

13 For if any of you, contrary to your Christian character and profession, and to my desire and hopes concerning you, should yield yourselves up to the suggestions of corrupt nature, for fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; the sure and sad effect will be, according to God's righteous threatening in his law, and your own just demerit, that whatever be your notions, pretences, and external privilege, ye will be found to have no real interest in Christ, and so will fall short of eternal life, and perish in, and for your iniquities, and *have your part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* (Rev. xxi. 8.) But if, on the contrary, as true believers in Christ, that are vitally united to him, ye, by the gracious aids and assistances of his Spirit, resist, subdue, and crucify those corrupt affections, principles, and practices,

N O T E.

are distinguished from each other by personal characters: And though Christ spoken of, in his human nature, as raised from the dead; yet he, in his original nature, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father, are *divine* persons, divided in essence and operation, and exerting one and the same power of the head, with joint concurrence, in raising the dead; as may be fairly concluded.

ed, because the resurrection of Christ and of believers is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, 1 Cor. vi. 14. at others to Christ himself, John ii. 19. 21. and v. 28. 29. and vi. 40.; and at others to the Holy Ghost, as here, and 1 Pet. iii. 18. And that *quickening our mortal bodies* is meant of raising them to eternal life. See Dr. Whitby on the place.

practices, that make up the body of sin, and chiefly vent themselves by, and consist in gratifications of the flesh; if, I say, ye maintain your holy opposition to them, till at length they expire, in conformity to your crucified Lord, and by virtue derived from him, as he died for your sins; ye, according to the gracious settlement of the gospel, on his account, shall live with him, soul and body, in mansions of all delight for ever.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

14 For whoever they be, that are conducted, assisted, and governed by the light and influence of the Spirit of God, in their minds, wills and affections, way and walk; they, and they only, are the sons of God by adoption, which gives them their title to everlasting life; and by a new birth, in which they are made partakers of an immortal and divine nature, in resemblance of their heavenly Father, that they may live to him here, and with him hereafter. And as many of *you* as are thus led by the Spirit, may be well assured of your sonship:

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

15 For *, under the gospel-state, ye have not received the Holy Spirit, to subject your souls again to such thralldom and servile fear, as resulted from, and was suited to, the darkness and terror of the legal dispensation; (*Gal. iv. 3, 24, 25.* and *Heb. ii. 15.*) and as filled the minds of *Gentile* believers before they were converted; or as worked in your own consciences, when he first convinced you of sin, and awakened your fears of the wrath of God, as denounced in his law, on its account: But, according to the light, liberty, and joy of the New Testament-dispensation, ye have been made partakers of the Spirit, in those sweet and emboldening operations, which are peculiar to the children of God, and produce filial dispositions towards him; and by which we †, who are led into the full liberty of the gospel, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, put in our humble claim of special relation to God, and are enabled to address him in our prayers with affection, fervour, and importunity, and with holy reverence, confidence, and freedom.

N O T E S.

* These words are brought in, not only as a *proof*, that they, *who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God*; but also as an *evidence*, whereby they, that receive the spirit of adoption, may know themselves to be so.

† *Abba* is a word of that *Hebrew* dialect, which was commonly used in the apostle's days, and signifies *Father*. Accordingly it was pronounced in that language, by our Lord in his agony, (*Mark xiv. 36.*) and the evangelist, writing in

Greek, very properly gave the interpretation of it. But as the apostle had no such occasion of using this term in a different language, his here mentioning it, and giving its signification in *Greek*, was at the same time changing the person from *ye* to *we*, may possibly intimate that believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* have a like interest in, and pay a like regard in their fervent addresses to God, as their Father. Vid. *Witsf. Oeconom. Fed. p. 434.*

dom, as our Father, in like manner as Christ himself did, when he said *Abba*, which signifies *Father*. (Mark xiv. 36.)

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

16 In thus pouring out our souls to God, with an assurance of faith in him, through Jesus Christ, as our Father, the Divine Spirit himself *, by working these gracious dispositions in us, and by shining upon his own work with clear and distinguishing light, to shew us that he is indeed the author of it, by means of, and according to his word, bears an evident testimony, and gives our own souls a satisfactory assurance, and so concurs or joins with our own spirits in witnessing, that we are really brought into a covenant-relation to God, as his children, by adopting and regenerating grace.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

17 And as surely as we are, in such a peculiar sense, the children of our reconciled God and Father, we, by right of sonship, are entitled to a rich and glorious inheritance, answerable to the high dignity and relation, to which he has advanced us: We then are heirs of the great God himself, that all he is and has may be our portion, to be employed for our benefit, or enjoyed by us; and we are herein co-heirs, not indeed in an equality, but in our order and measure, as inheritors by grace, together with Christ himself, our elder brother, and in his right, who is by nature the eternal Son of God, and so is the original heir of all; and who condescended to be *made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) He has brought us into this near and happy relation to his Father and our Father, (*John xx. 17.*) with whom he now lives in all his glory; and has given us an heirship with himself, that we might have a glorious resurrection to eternal life by him, and together with him, who *is the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* (Col. i. 18.) And if, as is to be expected in this sinful and uncertain world, we suffer and endure the greatest trials and persecutions, even to death, for his sake, and in conformity to him who calls us to them, and will stand by us in them, and carry us through them; it is all ordered, designed, and over-ruled to this happy end, that we may be also conformable to him in his joys and triumphs, and may reign with him, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) in his immediate

Q o o 2

N O T E.

* The Spirit is here spoken of as a distinct person, who in a free, intelligent, and authoritative manner, bears witness with our spirits; and God is said to know

the mind of the Spirit, who makes intercession for the saints. (ver. 27.) And therefore this passage might be rendered, *The Spirit himself bears witness, &c.*

ciate presence, and by derivation from him, whose glory, reflected upon us, will make us exceeding glorious; and who will then publicly own us for his brethren, and give us a rich and everlasting amends for all our sufferings with faith and patience, after his example, and for his sake.

13 For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

18 For having carefully examined and balanced accounts, and *that* under divine and infallible direction, I compute, (*λογίζομαι*) and am thoroughly satisfied, that all the afflictions of every kind, that can possibly befall us in the body, while we are passing through this present transitory life, and are exercised with the forest tribulations in these perilous days of persecution and reproach; all these, put together, are so short, light, and trivial, that they do not deserve to be once mentioned, as a counterpoise; or to be brought into the least comparison, in an estimate of loss and gain, or of merit and reward, with *the exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, (2 Cor. iv. 17.) which shall be clearly manifested to us, and in us, before the whole world of angels and men, at the revelation of Jesus Christ, *when he who is our life shall appear, and we shall appear with him in glory; and when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (Col. iii. 4. and 2 Thess. i. 10.)

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

19 For so illustrious, important, and delightful is the state of things, which will then be introduced*, that the human race in general, and the *Gentile* world itself, are earnestly wishing, longing, and waiting for the final happiness†, which they have only some confused

NOTES.

* The various interpretations that have been given of this and the three following extremely difficult verses, principally turn upon the different senses, in which the words, *creature* (*κτίσις*) and *the whole creation, or every creature* (*παντα κτίσις*) may be taken; some understanding them of the whole visible creation of this lower world; and others only of mankind in general, or of the *Gentile* world in particular. In the first of these views, the apostle's discourse on this head is as strong and noble a *prophopoeia* as we any where meet with, either in scripture, or in any other celebrated writings whatsoever. In the second, the expressions are less figurative; and are to be understood in such a sense as is some way applicable to intelligent creatures: (See *Blackwall's sacred classifiers*, Vol. I. p. 360.) And yet it is no easy matter to keep up such an application throughout, in full consistency with

the state of mankind in general, or of the *Gentile* world in particular, as Dr. Hammond and Dr. Whitby put it. But, as it is not clear to me in which of these senses the term *creature* is most directly intended in this discourse, I have attempted a paraphrase that may comport with them all.

† This *expectation* and *waiting* may be ascribed even to the *Gentiles*, that had no explicit knowledge or belief of what this glorious state would be, much in the same manner as Christ, before his incarnation, was called *the desire of all nations*; and the *isles* were said to *wait for his law*: (Hag. ii. 7. and Isa. xlii. 4.) And it intimates that the felicity of this time will be so great as to be a proper object of the utmost desire of mankind, who could not but eagerly wish for it, upon its being revealed to them, with a prospect of their sharing in it, as it now was to the *Gentile* world.

fused notions of; but which will certainly attend the last days, when the exalted dignity of the sons of God shall be manifested in all its lustre, to make them appear like themselves; and when every one shall see them possessed of all the grandeur and delights that belong to the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: (*ver. 17.*) Yea, so exceeding desirable is this state, that, methinks, even the whole creation, which lies under the curse, and is so much disordered by sin; and particularly the brutal part of it, which suffers, and is so much oppressed, by the cruelties of men, lifts up its head, and stretches it forward, as looking, with eager impatience, (*ἀποκατάστασις*) for the relieving advantageous alteration, which shall then be made upon its whole frame, suitable to the wonderful scene of liberty, peace, and magnificence, that shall then be opened in honour to the children of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

20 For how much soever sin and folly, sickleness, weakness, misery, and death, which well deserve the name of vanity, have reigned over the whole human race, (*Job xi. 12. Psal. lxii. 9. and lxxviii. 33.*) and how greatly soever the heathen world has fallen into vain superstition and idolatry; (*Rom. i. 21,—23.*) and though both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are liable to death, so that every man walks in a vain show, and at his best estate is altogether vanity; (*Psal. xxxix. 5, 6.*) yet they were not originally reduced to this wretched condition by their own choice, or of their own accord; but by the fall of the first man, *Adam*, their common father, and covenant-head; and by the judicial sentence of the great God, on account of his sin; (*Gen. iii. 19.*) as also by the power, subtilty and malice of the devil, at whose instigation that sin was committed, (*Gen. iii. 4, &c.*) and who thereupon became the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them which believe not; and is the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: (*2 Cor. iv. 4. and Eph. ii. 2.*) And to the like origin are owing all the hideous disorders and confusions that have spread through the whole frame of nature, which are contrary to its primitive principles and tendencies; but were brought upon it by the sin of man, and by the righteous curse of God; a specimen of which was given in that which passed upon the ground for his sake, (*Gen. iii. 17, 18.*) and by Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who has ever since helped it forward, by his malignant, though invisible agency, as in the destruction which God suffered him to bring, by storms, upon *Job's* children and cattle. (*Job i. 12,—19.*)

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now:

23 And we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now:

24 And we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now:

25 And we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now:

21 But this sad state, in which mankind and all creatures of this lower world are involved, is not absolutely desperate: They, according to their respective natures, are waiting like persons in hope*, that a time of deliverance will come to them. Thus the *Gentiles*, as well as mankind in general, are not without some wishful hope, that they shall one day be set at liberty from their servitude to sin and Satan, and from the power of death, through fear of which they have been all their life-time subject to bondage; (Heb. ii. 15.) and that some time or other they shall be brought into a happy condition, which we, by the gospel-revelation, know to be the inheritance that shall be enjoyed, in a glorious state of liberty, by all the children of God: And, while we observe the present unnatural situation of the sensitive and inanimate parts of the world, we seem to see them looking forward in hope, that they also, at the restitution of all things, (*Acts* iii. 21.) shall be delivered from all the oppression and confusion, which, by the sin of man, they have been subjected to; and that they shall be restored to their primitive liberty and order, which, in a vastly more exalted degree and kind, God's own children will be advanced unto, in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. (2 Pet. iii. 13.)

22 For we Christians very well know, by observation, and by the word of God, that (*πασα ἡ κτίσις*) all the human race groan together, like over-loaded men, under the burden of sin and misery, and are distressed, like women in labour, (*συνιστᾷ καὶ συνωδῖναι*) earnestly wishing and longing for deliverance, as they have done from the fall of man to this very day: Yea, many of the *Gentiles* are at present under the pangs of the new birth, and have been so, ever since the gospel was first preached to them: And even the animals themselves, like creatures oppressed under the burden of the curse, which is laid upon them, are, as it were, still heaving and struggling after a happy deliverance, not only from their yoke of servitude,

but

shall also be delivered, &c. This makes

* In hope, as some expositors observe, should be rather made the beginning of the 21st, than the close of the 20th verse. And I should chuse to consider all that comes between the 19th verse, and in hope, as a parenthesis, to shew how the creature became subject to vanity; and so the connection stands thus: The earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, in hope (or) that the creature itself shall also be delivered, &c. This makes the sense clear and easy: But it is all confused, and hardly explicable, on supposition, that in hope refers to him who has subjected the creature to its present state of vanity. He who has done this, some say is the devil, others Adam, and others God. I take it to be most directly and immediately meant of Adam; and yet as God had a righteous, and the devil a wicked and tyrannical hand in it, I have included them all.

but also from the cruelties and abuses which they undergo to the dishonour of God, their Creator, and for the gratification of the more than brutish lusts of those that tyrannize over them, and riot upon them.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

23 And there are not only among all ranks of creatures, according to their different kinds, these strong aspirations after a better state, to free them from the heavy pressures that lie upon them; but we ourselves likewise who have already received the earnest of the Spirit, in his sanctifying, sealing, and comforting operations *, which, like the first-fruits of harvest, though comparatively small, are of the same kind with the whole, and are pledges, evidences, and securities of our hereafter enjoying the heavenly inheritance: (*Eph. i. 13, 14.*) We Christians, I say, not being yet arrived to that high pitch of holiness and happiness which we are breathing after; even we ourselves, notwithstanding all our present joy and peace in believing, are exceedingly troubled, and secretly groan in our own spirits, under an affecting and humbling sense of the body of sin, which still remains with us, and of all the afflictions and the corporal death which it subjects us to; (*chap. vii. 23, 24.*) and we wait with longing desire, and assured hope, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, for a complete possession of all the exalted privileges and blessings which are entailed upon, and are the fruits of our adoption into the family of God; and which shall be perfected in the deliverance of our mortal bodies from the power of death, and in their resurrection to an immortal life, *that they may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*, (*Phil. iii. 21.*) and that we, in our whole persons, may be advanced to all the dignity and delights which shall be revealed in us, as *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*. (*ver. 17, 18.*)

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth

24 For, at present, we have not this complete salvation in actual possession, but only in hope, and sure reversion, as it is laid up, and secured in Christ for us: But hope of things that are already enjoyed, is not, properly speaking, *hope*, which is a comfortable expectation

N O T E.

* "The *first-fruits*, says the pious and ingenious Dr. *Watts*, of any field, or plant, or tree, are of the same kind with the full product, or the harvest: Therefore it is plain, that the first-fruits of the Spirit in this place, cannot chiefly signify the *gifts* of the Spirit, such as the gifts of healing, or of miracles, nor the gifts of prophecy, preaching, or praying, because these

"are not the employments nor the enjoyments of heaven. The *first-fruits of the Spirit* must rather refer therefore to the knowledge and holiness, the graces and the joys, which are more perfect and glorious in the heavenly state, than they were ever designed to be here upon earth." *The world to come*, Vol. II. p. 116.

doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

26 And as this delightful hope encourages and supports our patient waiting, under all our present griefs and burdens; so the Holy Spirit likewise assists and relieves us, by his concurring light and energy, under all the imperfections, weaknesses, and troubles of this mortal life; which would otherwise carry us into unseasonable and impatient desires of deliverance, before God's time: For, by reason of remaining darkness, selfishness, carnality, and perturbation of spirit, we often misjudge of what may be most for God's glory and our own good; and so, as to the matter of prayer, we are, of ourselves, at a loss, in many circumstances, to know what petitions are best for us to offer; and as to the manner of prayer, we are as little capable of knowing how to order our addresses to God, in so believing, spiritual, and fervent, holy, humble, and submissive a manner, and with such unitedness of heart, free from wanderings and distractions, as in duty becomes us, and as is necessary unto the acceptableness of our humble pleas with him. But that divine person, whom our blessed Lord promised to send as the paraclete, or Comforter; (John xvi. 7.) and whom we have received, as the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; (ver. 15. of this chapter,) even the Holy Ghost himself, as the spirit of grace and supplication, (Zech. xii. 10.) indites our prayers for us, by his gracious suggestions to us *; and excites and enables us to

expectation of some future benefit: For what any one has in hand, and sees himself possessed of, How can it be said, with any propriety, that he still only hopes for it? Or why should he talk of hoping for what he already has in enjoyment?

25 But if we do indeed hope for deliverance from all that here defiles and distresses us, and for something still better than we yet enjoy; we then, in proportion to the strength and assurance of our hope, patiently endure all present trials and afflictions, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; (chap. v. 2, &c.) waiting, in his way, with calm and humble resignation, for his time of admitting us to it, and with firm expectation, that it will entirely dismiss us from all the evils we are here groaning under, and will crown us with everlasting blessedness and honour.

26 And as this delightful hope encourages and supports our patient waiting, under all our present griefs and burdens; so the Holy Spirit likewise assists and relieves us, by his concurring light and energy, under all the imperfections, weaknesses, and troubles of this mortal life; which would otherwise carry us into unseasonable and impatient desires of deliverance, before God's time: For, by reason of remaining darkness, selfishness, carnality, and perturbation of spirit, we often misjudge of what may be most for God's glory and our own good; and so, as to the matter of prayer, we are, of ourselves, at a loss, in many circumstances, to know what petitions are best for us to offer; and as to the manner of prayer, we are as little capable of knowing how to order our addresses to God, in so believing, spiritual, and fervent, holy, humble, and submissive a manner, and with such unitedness of heart, free from wanderings and distractions, as in duty becomes us, and as is necessary unto the acceptableness of our humble pleas with him. But that divine person, whom our blessed Lord promised to send as the paraclete, or Comforter; (John xvi. 7.) and whom we have received, as the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; (ver. 15. of this chapter,) even the Holy Ghost himself, as the spirit of grace and supplication, (Zech. xii. 10.) indites our prayers for us, by his gracious suggestions to us *; and excites and enables us to

N O T E.

* The Spirit's making intercession, is not to be understood of his acting the part of a mediator between God and us, or with God for us, which is the peculiar office of Christ, our great high priest and advocate: For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the

Man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. ii. 5.) But it is meant of his relieving our infirmities, as our counsellor and assister, in our religious addresses to God: For his interceding is said to be, not by his agency with God, but with us, to help our infirmities, and to excite and regulate our groanings

to offer them up with such vehement pantings and breathings of soul, in an admirable mixture of faith and patience, importunity and hope, for seasonable succour under, and deliverance from, all our pressing weights and troubles in this present mortal state, as exceed the power of language to express, and as sometimes melt and sweetly overwhelm our souls to such a degree, that we cannot tell how to form them into suitable words.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

27 But (2d) whether we can fully express these inward strong workings of our souls, in a just and proper manner, or not; the omniscient God, whose peculiar prerogative it is to know, and search the hearts of the children of men, (1 Kings viii. 39. and 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) is not only acquainted with, but observes, and approves of, what we aim at, and are earnestly pressing after, under the influence, and according to the design of the blessed Spirit's dictates to us; because all his assistances of holy souls, in their desires and pleas, are perfectly agreeable to the mind and will of God, and to the declarations of his word: We therefore may be confident that he hears, and in due time will answer us, in *whatsoever we ask according to his will.* (1 John v. 14.)

28 And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

28 And, for our further comfort, under all our present groanings, we, who believe, are fully satisfied, from God's peculiar relation and affection to his children through Jesus Christ, from the tenor of his gracious covenant, and from our own and other Christians experience, that every occurrence of Providence, and even the worst circumstances that can befall us, in this present frail and imperfect state, are wisely and kindly ordered to our advantage: Yea, though they be ever so dark, perplexing, and seemingly contrary to us, and though, viewing them apart, and by themselves, we are apt to say, with good old *Jacob*, (Gen. xlii. 36.) *All these things are against us;* yet it is an established maxim of faith with us, that, by the over-ruling wisdom, power, and grace of God, they not only hereafter shall, but even now at present do, co-operate, (*συνεργει*) in their connections and issues, one with another, together with his special influence, and the serious reflections of a sanctified mind, to promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of them,

N O T E.

groanings. And God is spoken of, as in a right manner for ourselves, just as the searcher of our hearts, with respect to his knowing the mind of the Spirit, or the thoughts which he raises in our minds; and so the Spirit's making intercession for us, is his causing us to pray, *his crying, Abba, Father.* (Gal. iv. 6.) is his enabling us so to cry. Accordingly our apostle, (ver. 15.) speaks of him as *the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

them, that have a sincere and predominant affection to God, as their chief good, and highest end; even of them, who have not only heard the rich overtures of the gospel, with the hearing of the ear *; but are likewise brought, by the inward and effectual workings of the Spirit with the word, to hearken to it and embrace it; and so are emphatically, and in a way of peculiarity, *the called of God*, (τῶν κλητῶν) *not indeed according to their works; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* (2 Tim. i. 9.)

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

29 And this eternal purpose of God's unsearchable wisdom and grace, is the original spring of all the good we have in hand, and in hope: For thus stands the holy connection of his sovereign and merciful decrees, and the order of his executing them, by various steps, in a way becoming himself, till they be all fulfilled in our complete salvation; those among the sinful and miserable race of mankind, who in common with the rest of the world, are in themselves utterly unworthy of his favour †, but whom

NOTES.

* As our Lord tells us, that *many are called, but few are chosen*; Matth. xx. 16. (see the note there,) so this *calling of God, according to his purpose*, cannot relate to them, that are only externally called by the gospel, according to the eternal design of God, that it should be preached to them; because *all things* cannot be said to *work together for good to them*, that are only called in that sense, as appears from multitudes that are hardened in their wickedness, and perish under the gospel: And the calling, here spoken of, is only of such as *love God*, and so are effectually wrought upon to yield obedience to his call, by means of the gospel, according to his eternal purpose, that they should be so, through the attending power of his Spirit: And it is such a calling, as is connected with, and certainly issues in, the *justification and glorification* of all that are partakers of it, as appears from ver. 30. See also the note on chap. ix. 6.

† God's foreknowing them is not to be understood merely of his prescience, as all things lay eternally, in one comprehensive view, before his infinite mind: For, in this sense, *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*; (Acts xv. 13.) and so he foreknew every thing, relating to all others, as well as to the persons here intended; whereas something distinguishing is apparently

meant in his foreknowledge of these. Nor is it to be understood of his fore-approving them, on account of his seeing before-hand, that they would be true lovers of him, and be holy in conformity to Christ: For he predestinated them, not as conformed, but to be conformed to the image of his Son; and he chose them in him, before the foundation of the world, not because he foresaw that they would be, but that they might, or should be holy, and without blame before him in love. (Eph. i. 4.) So that every thing of this kind is the consequence and effect, and not the cause of the foreknowledge here spoken of. It is therefore, I humbly apprehend, to be taken for God's distinguishing and appropriating regard to them, in a way of love, kindness, and choice, by an act of his understanding, in concurrence with his gracious will: Hence it is called, *His good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself, and the counsel of his own will*, Eph. i. 9, 11. to shew that it is an act of love, reignty in God, and yet is conducted with unerring judgment, as well as peculiar love, though the reasons of it be entirely within himself, beyond the reach of our account; and this is called *his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* (2 Tim. i. 9.) According to the use of the word, *knowing* often signifies such a knowledge

in his kind thoughts from everlasting, according to the good pleasure of his will, (Eph. i. 5.) he set his free love and choice upon: These very persons he also determined, before all worlds, should be made conformable, in due time, to his own eternal Son; by their bearing his likeness, as far as possible, in holiness, and needful sufferings here, and in all the glory and blessedness of the heavenly state hereafter; (ver. 17.) that he might have the dignity of being the prince, ruler, and chief of a numerous family, whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren; (Heb. ii. 11.) and for whom he rose, as the first-born from the dead, (Col. i. 18.) that they might rise after him to glory; and that as they have bore the image of the earthly, they might also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Cor. xv. 49.)

30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

30 Furthermore, those, whom God in this manner fore-ordained from all eternity, to holiness and sufferings, as proper means, in this fallen world, of training them up, and sitting them for the heavenly glory, which he appointed them unto, as the end; them he also, in execution of his decrees, effectually called out of darkness into his marvellous light; (1 Pet. ii. 9.) and whom he thus called internally by his grace, as well as externally by the gospel, them he also acquitted from guilt and law condemnation, and accepted as righteous, through the righteousness of his Son: And whom he thus freely justified, them he also advanced to all the honours and enjoyments of the heavenly world, where they are freed from all their tribulations, and are glorified together with, and in conformity to their exalted head and Redeemer*.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God

31 What shall we then say, or say, in reflection upon these great and gracious designs and performances of God for us, who in ourselves are so utterly unworthy

P P P 2

N O T E S.

is with love and choice, as in Exod. xxxiii. 17. Amos iii. 2. John x. 14, 15. and 1 Tim. ii. 19. Answerable hereunto, God's foreknowledge is used in such a sense relating to his decrees, as includes his affection and good-will, chap. i. 2. (see the note there,) where the apostle says, God hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew; and the apostle Peter speaks of the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, &c. (1 Pet. i. 2.) And the same word, that, in the place before us, is rendered foreknew, (προγινωσκω) translated fore-ordained, (προορίζω) 1 Pet. i. 20. And it seems to be of much the same import with God's gra-

cious purpose, which is mentioned at the close of the preceding verse in this eighth chapter to the Romans.

* All this is spoken of as already done in the gracious purpose of God, which has inseparably connected these happy effects together, to be accomplished in their proper order; and because, by virtue of his eternal decree, there is an infallible certainty of these great events, with respect to every appointed heir of salvation, they are mentioned as if they were already past: But it can no more be inferred from hence, that they were actually and personally justified, than that they were actually and personally called and glorified, from eternity.

God be for us, who can be against us?

worthy of them, and are still encompassed with so many infirmities, difficulties, and dangers? How can we sufficiently admire, and rejoice in his love? Or what can we wish for more, to encourage our patience and hope, and to support, comfort and secure us under all our troubles? If, as we have seen, the infinitely wise, unchangeable, and almighty God be such a sure and fast friend to us, and his perfections, purposes, promises, and operations be all on our side, to secure our eternal happiness, what signify all the malicious, crafty, and powerful attempts of our most inveterate enemies, be they ever so great or many, against us? What hurt can the world, the devil, and all his instruments do unto us? Or why should we be dismayed at them?

31 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

32 He who loved us at such a surprising rate, that rather than we should perish, he did not withhold his own proper, and only begotten Son, (*τὸ ἰδιόν υἱόν* *ἑαυτοῦ*) and did not favour or abate him, in any thing that in law and justice was due to us for our iniquities, and was necessary to be suffered in order to our redemption; but of his own accord, unasked by us, delivered him up to bear our sins, and to die in our room and stead, as a sacrifice of atonement for every one of us *, whom he has chosen and called to grace and glory: How unreasonable is it to suppose, that with this grand capital gift, which was so dear to himself, and by which a purchase was made of all other blessings at the vast expence of his own Son's precious blood: How can it be thought that this God will not, in the riches of his love and grace, freely give us, together with him, and for his sake, every thing else that is needful for us, relating to soul and body, till all be completed in eternal salvation? he, who has done the greater for us, even when we were enemies, will undoubtedly do the less, now he has made us friends. Whether therefore we consider our danger, on account of our sins, or sufferings, neither of them shall be our ruin.

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth;

33 As to our *sins*, though, alas! they have been many and great, and we have too much still to charge ourselves with, and to mourn over and be humbled for; and though Satan and the world, and our own

conscience

N O T E.

* The sense of *us all* is to be determined by the subjects that are spoken of all along in this discourse; and they are God's *elect*, whom he *predestinated, called, justified, and glorified*; whom God is for, in such a manner that none can prevail against them; and to whom he *freely gives all things, and makes all*

things work together for good; and who are *more than conquerors, through him that loved them, and never shall be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, as they are described in the foregoing and following context.

consciences may justly accuse us; yet who shall implead (*τις συκαλεισι*) or prosecute us at the bar of God, and fix a law-charge of guilt upon any of us who are the objects of his peculiar choice, and whom, as has been said, (*ver. 30.*) he has called and justified? None can do this: For it is God himself, whose judgment is according to truth, that accounts and pronounces us absolved from guilt, and righteous to eternal life: And as he, and he only, who is the party offended by sin, and is judge of the law, can justify; so he abides by his own sentence, and will suffer none to reverse it*.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

34 Though there are indeed many things condemnable in us, and a malicious world is ready, on all occasions, to aggravate our faults, and pass the severest censures upon us; and though we may be unjustly condemned at the bar of men: Yet who is he, that shall undertake to subject us to the curse of the law, and condemn us at the bar of God, to our eternal destruction? men and devils cannot, and we may be sure that our dear Redeemer will not: For it is he, who, in the greatness of his love, freely put himself into our law-place to redeem us from its curse; (*Gal. iii. 13.*) and gave his life a ransom for us: (*Matth. xx. 28.*) Yea, rather, to strengthen our humble confidence in him, I add, that it is he, who was not only delivered for our offences; but rose again, as a public head, for our justification, (*chap. iv. 25.*) and who, in further token, that divine justice is fully satisfied by his death, is now exalted to the highest authority and glory, in God the Father's immediate presence, which, to speak in figurative terms that are expressive of the greatest dignity and honour, (see the note on *Acts vii. 55.*) may be called his sitting on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, (*Heb. viii. 1.*) to exercise an universal rule and dominion for our advantage, and to pass a public absolving sentence upon us, as our Judge, at the last day: And that we may entirely depend upon his friendship, to secure our standing in the favour of God, we are assured that he ever lives, as a righteous advocate, to plead the merit of his atoning blood in his prevalent intercession for us; in which he represents his will and claim, that we, on his account, may be eternally saved.

35 And

NOTE.

* Some are for reading the last clause of this, and the second in the next verse, with an interrogation thus, *Shall God that justifies? Shall Christ that died?* And so the apostle argues the absurdity of supposing, that God should lay any thing

to the charge of them whom he justifies; or that Christ should condemn them for whom he died. And if we have nothing of this kind to fear from either of them; there can be no danger of it from any one else whatsoever.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

35 And as to our *sufferings*, What enemy, or what circumstances and events shall ever be able to alienate Christ's heart from * us, or ours from him? or exclude us from a share in the saving designs, fruits, and manifestations of his special love, in the freeness of which he has already done such wonderful things for us? We may boldly challenge the very worst that can assault or befall us, and bid them all defiance, in the holy triumphs of our faith †: Shall any afflictions in the ordinary course of providence, such as sickness, pains and poverty, losses and disappointments in life, that are grievous and oppressive to the body, part between Christ and us; so that he should not love us, or we not love him? No. Or shall distress of soul under a humbling sense of guilt, the temptations of Satan, the disallowed workings of indwelling corruption, and the hidings of God's face; or any perplexity of spirit, from which we know not how to extricate ourselves? Or shall any persecutions for the sake of Christ, that affect our reputation, liberty and property? Or shall any instances of hardship, that reduce us to the utmost straits, even to the want of necessary food to refresh and support us; or of proper raiment to cover and defend us from the severity of seasons? Or shall any other dangers that threaten the loss of our lives themselves? Or shall a violent death, by the sword of the civil magistrate, produce this dismal effect? No. None of these calamities (*persecutions*) shall divide between us and this love, though we have reason to expect the greatest of them.

36 For what was said in former ages, and *that* with a prophetic spirit, relating to God's people in perilous circumstances for their fidelity to him, is equally applicable to us, as it is written, (*Psal. xlv. 22.*) *For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter*, that is, on account of our relation and adherence to thee, and espousing thy cause, and bearing thy name, we are daily and hourly exposed to the danger of death; and many of us are frequently cut off by the hands of violent

NOTES.

* *The love of Christ* here, and *the love of God in him*, ver. 39. may signify their love to us, or our love to them: But *separate* refers to both.

† Here the apostle enumerates abundance of trials, which he expresses in different words, to exaggerate them, and take in every thing of the afflictive kind, that might be supposed to endanger a miscarriage: And I have endeavoured to keep the ideas as distinct as I can, in each of them.

lent persecutors ; we are marked out and devoted to destruction, in like manner as sheep are to be butchered ; though we, like them, be meek and inoffensive in our temper ; innocent and harmless, as to the crimes that our enemies impute to us ; and are beneficial to mankind while we live, and patient under our sufferings when we come to die. But, be it that all these calamities befall us, shall they shut us out of Christ's love ? or take off our love to him ?

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

37 No, so far from this, that in all, even the worst of these events, we are not only carried with safety and success through them, and made superior to them, and finally victorious over them ; but we even rejoice and triumph, and glory in them, (*chap. v. 3.*) as they are overbalanced by inward supports and consolations, (*2 Cor. i. 5.*) and are made to subserve the exercise and improvement of our graces ; and as they wean us from this world, and sweeten the thoughts of heaven to us, and make us the more desirous of it, and the fitter for it, and *work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* ; (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*) and so we suffer no real loss, but gain the greatest advantage by them, even already here, and shall do so for ever ; not indeed by any worthiness, strength, or wisdom of our own ; but through the meritorious obedience and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ ; through his victory over this world for us ; and through his over-ruling conduct and gracious assistance, who has loved us to such a matchless degree, as to lay down his own life, that he might make us conquerors and triumphers over all that would interpose between him and us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

38 For whatever occurrences we meet with, whether of the adverse or prosperous kind, in the body * ; I firmly believe, and am fully satisfied, upon the sure principles of divine revelation, relating to the unchangeableness of God's thoughts, purposes, and covenant of grace, and to the merit of the dear Redeemer's blood, and the efficacy of his intercession, that, on one hand, neither the fears, terrors, and agonies of death, nor its stroke, whether it come to us in a natural or violent course ; nor, on the other, the desire and hope of life, nor any entangling or ensnaring circumstances in it, arising from its caresses or pleasures ; nor those most powerful of all creatures, the angels, whether they be good or bad ; not the

good

N O T E.

* Here the apostle rises in his argument, to shew, that the dangers which might be supposed to spring from the al-
 world, cannot prevail to make a separation between the love of Christ, or of God in him, and those that are once interested in it.

good, who are sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation, (Heb. i. 14.) nor the bad, who do indeed seek all occasions against us, but cannot devour us; (1 Pet. i. 5. and v. 8.) nor * any force, or policy of even the superior, or most potent orders of the holy, or of the wicked angelic spirits; nor any secular princes and magistrates upon earth, how violently soever they may persecute us for the sake of Christ; nor any present trials, nor future dangers of any kind;

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

39. Nor the ensnaring height of all worldly prosperity, were we to be advanced to it; nor the deepest adversity that we can be plunged into: To sum up all in a word, I am thoroughly persuaded, that neither these, nor any other person or thing, in the whole sphere of nature, that can be imagined, shall at any time be capable of cutting us off, or setting us at a distance, from the infinite and unchangeable love of God the Father, which is fixed upon us, and manifested to us, and performs all things for us, in and through the great Mediator, who is our only Lord and Saviour, and who himself equally loves us; (ver. 35.) nor can any, or all of these remove from our souls their sincere love to Christ, or to God, as manifesting himself to us through him. (See the note on ver. 35.)

RECollections.

What dreadful work has sin made in the world! It has turned the natural bent and bias of our hearts towards earthly and sensual things, and into enmity to God and his law; has brought them under spiritual death and condemnation, and moral impotency to do what is pleasing to him; yea, all mankind in general, and even the sensitive and inanimate parts of this lower world, groan under the dismal effects of the fall, and seem to be in pain, like a woman in travel, for deliverance from the bondage of misery and disorder to which the sin of man has subjected them, and for that happy and orderly state to which there is hope of their being restored, when all things shall be made new; and even believers themselves, during this mortal life, are attended with many natural and sinful infirmities, tribulations and distresses, from which they cannot but earnestly long to be delivered. And yet so great is their remaining darkness and corruption, that, in numberless instances, they neither know of themselves what is fittest for them to ask of God.

NOTE.

* By *principalities and powers* some understand *superior ranks and orders* of angels, which, whether they be of the good or evil sort, are described under these terms, Eph. iii. 10. and vi. 12. But others take them to mean *earthly potentates and rulers*, who are called *principalities and powers*, Tit. iii. 1. And I am inclined to think that our apostle most directly intended the *persecuting powers upon earth*; because this widens the argument, and keeps its several parts most distinct: And yet as the

argument is still further strengthened by giving the greatest latitude to these expressions, in an enumeration of particulars, which, whatever were the apprehensions of believers themselves, their enemies might think likely to be unfriendly to them, and so to occasion their carriage, I have included the *principal angels*, both good and bad, according to the sense that is given of the foregoing passage, which doubtless relates to this upper rank of creatures.

how to pray for it in such a manner as is acceptable to him. Nevertheless, how great is the safety, honour, and happiness of them that are in Christ; that mind and favour not the things of the flesh, but of the spirit; that are led by, walk, and live after the spirit; to whom they are infinitely indebted, and not at all to the flesh; and that, through his influence, mortify the body of sin! There is even now no condemnation to them; but the perfect righteousness demanded by the law, as the condition of life, is completely fulfilled for them by God's own divine Son, whom he sent, and who came in the appearance of sinful flesh, to take away their sin by the sacrifice of himself: They are the children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and in his right; the same spirit dwells in them, which he himself, as their head, was filled with above measure: And though their bodies are mortal, like other men's, by reason of sin; yet their souls are alive to God, and shall live for ever, by means of the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and of a work of holiness wrought in them; and their bodies themselves shall be raised to immortal glory, in resemblance of their risen Saviour, by virtue of their union with him, and by his spirit which dwells in them. And what a comfort is it to have this good spirit, to witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God; to assist them, as to the matter and manner of prayer; and to give them humble boldness and holy freedom in their thoughts of God, and addresses to him, as their heavenly Father! But O how much greater still is the blessedness, that they shall be partakers of hereafter! They shall be glorified together with Christ; and shall then be openly manifested, and treated, as the children of the Most High, in a state of entire freedom from all imperfections and sorrows, and of the utmost honour and felicity, which shall abide for ever. What matter of triumph in Christ is all this, amidst the various persecutions and trials that here beset them! Though numerous enemies set themselves against them, none can prevail to their ruin, because God is for them, and has assured them of all things working together for their good; and he, who has given his own Son to suffer and die, with the utmost extremity, for their redemption, will not stick at giving them all things with him, that he knows to be best for them. Though they are humbly sensible of many sins, which might be charged upon them; yet who can fix a law-charge to their condemnation at the bar of God, since it is he that justifies them; and Christ has died and rose again, and ever lives to make intercession for them? What an infallible certainty, and beautiful order is there in the salvation of God's elect! He fore-ordained them to be conformed to the holy and suffering image of his Son, and calls and justifies them here, that they may be glorified with their head and elder Brother hereafter. And O how affecting and engaging are the thoughts of Christ's love, and of the love of God in him! So great, so free, and unchangeable is this love, that no circumstances of life, or forms of death; no allurements of prosperity, or terrors of adversity; no fears or dangers from any quarter, can ever separate between the love of God and the lovers of him; or alienate Christ's heart from them, or theirs from him. But they already are, and shall one day appear to be, not only conquerors, but triumphers over, and even gainers by all that would come between God and them, through him who has loved them.

C H A P. IX.

The apostle expresses the deep concern of his heart, that the generality of his countrymen were strangers to the great blessings of the gospel, 1,—5. Shews that the promises given to the fathers are, nevertheless, made good to the spiritual seed of Abraham, to the end that the purpose of God might stand, 6,—13. Answers objections against God's sovereign conduct, in exercising mercy towards these, and justice toward the carnal Israelites, 14,—23. Shews that this sovereignty runs through his dealings both with Jews and Gentiles, 24,—29. And that there is no reason to complain of the Gentiles attaining righteousness, for justification through faith, since the Jews falling short of it is owing to their not seeking it in that way, but by the works of the law, 30,—33.

TEXT.

I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

PARAPHRASE.

IT would be the rejoicing of my soul, if what has been said of the glorious blessings that belong to the peculiar objects of God's love, might be affirmed of the whole body of the Jewish nation *; and while I see, by sad effects, that it is quite otherwise, I, as a Christian, who dare not lie, declare with all the solemnity of a religious oath, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in his sight and presence, who searches the reins and hearts, and will give to every one according to their works, (Rev. ii. 23.) that what I am going to say, is strictly and unfeignedly true, without the least hypocrisy or deceit, ill-will, or prejudice against mine own countrymen; but, in all tenderness to them, and faithfulness to my apostolic office: My own conscience likewise, as enlightened, directed, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, is to me instead of a thousand witnesses of my sincerity therein; and I appeal, for the truth of this, to that Divine Spirit, who searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

2 I in this solemn manner profess, that I am extremely distressed, and always feel the bitterest agonies in my soul, which are as sharp as the pangs of a woman in travail (*edown*) whenever I think or speak of the awful and deplorable condition of the generality of the Jews on account of their unbelief.

N O T E.

* It is with an admirable spirit and address that the apostle here vents the grief of his own heart, to soften the prejudices of his countrymen against him, in this melting and pathetic introduction to the awful and tremendous things that he was going to say concerning them, and that could not but be very distaste-

ful to them, who knew not how to bear the thought of any distinguishing favour being shewn to the Gentiles, especially to the exclusion of any, much more of the generality of their own nation; but fondly imagined, that all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were to be confined to themselves.

For I could with that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh:

3 For as Moses, in the greatness of his concern and affection for the *Israelites*, and of his zeal for the glory of God, prayed, (*Exod. xxxii. 32.*) that he might be blotted out of the book of the living, and out of the register of the house of Israel, (*Ezek. xiii. 9.*) rather than their sin should not be forgiven: So I, with the like temper of spirit, could freely submit to the greatest self-denials and sufferings that can be endured without sin, for their salvation. If, through their unreasonable prejudices against me, my reputation in the church of Christ is the occasion of their being offended at me, to their own perdition; I could be willing, for their recovery, to be deemed and treated as an excommunicated person, (*anathema sit*) to the loss of all the external privileges of the covenant, and of communion with the saints on earth, and of life itself; and to be accounted, according to their defamations of me, as the *filth of the world, and off-scouring of all things*, and as a *fellow not fit to live*: (*1 Cor. iv. 13. and Acts xxii. 22.*) Yea, were it lawful, and could it avail to the salvation of such vast multitudes, whom I have a natural affection for; methinks, I could even be contented to be cut off from the delights of present communion with Christ *, for the sake of my brethren of the *Jewish* nation and religion, and mine own countrymen, to whom I am so nearly related, as a native *Jew*, in natural, civil, and religious bonds; and whom God himself has so highly dignified and distinguished with eminent tokens of his favour for many ages past; as for instance,

4 Who are *Israelites*; to whom is committed the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

4 They are the descendents of the renowned *Jacob*, whom God himself surnamed *Israel*, to keep up an honourable memorial of the power of his faith in prayer, by which he, as a prince, prevailed with God for a blessing. (*Gen. xxxii. 28.*) And, answerable to the eminence of their parentage, they have been distinguished with exceeding great and valuable privileges, as the only visible church, and favourites of heaven; insomuch that they have been nationally taken into God's family, who publicly owned, and dealt with them, in his external dispensations, as *his sons, and his first born*, (*Exod. iv. 22, 23. and Jer. xxxi. 9, 20.*) and some of whom he made his children by a spiritual adoption, and by internal efficacious grace: And they accordingly had the temple, the ark, and

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* It is possible, that the apostle's love might, or could go so far, as to wish his zeal might rise to so high a strain, himself eternally separated from Christ, is expressed in the paraphrase: But I for the sake of any advantage to the scarce think that he either lawfully *Jews*.

the mercy-seat, the Shechina, and other visible tokens and emblems of his peculiar and gracious presence among them, which was their glory: (1 *Som.* iv. 21, 22. and *Psal.* lxxx. 1.) God also entered into a covenant with them for temporal and spiritual blessings, in various repetitions and administrations of it, which he first made with *Abraham*, (*Gen.* xii. 2, 3. and xvii. 7, &c.) and afterwards repeated to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*; (*chap.* xxvi. 3, 4. and xxviii. 13, 14.) and, last of all, to the whole church of *Israel*: (*Exod.* xxxiii. 1. *Deut.* xviii. 15. and xxx. 5, 6.) And he committed to them his holy oracles, (*Rom.* iii. 2.) when at mount *Sinai* he delivered to them the *moral* law, which is of eternal obligation, which he wrote, by a supernatural operation, on two tables of stone, (*Deut.* ix. 10. and x. 1, —5.) and which contained a clear and comprehensive summary of the law of nature, after it had been greatly obliterated in the heart of man by the fall; and to this he added, by special commandment to *Moses*, the *judicial* law, relating to their civil affairs, as a *nation* under his own immediate government: He also gave them the *ceremonial* law, relating to their religious concerns, and containing typical ordinances of divine worship, (*ἐκτετακται*) to be observed by them as a *church*: (*Exod.* chap. xxiv. &c.) And to this *Sinai*-dispensation † he annexed many promises of his being with them, and owning them for his people, while they should continue to walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments; and promises of his never casting them off, unless for their final obstinacy, impenitence, and unbelief. (*Exod.* xxiii. ver. 20. to the end; and *Deut.* chap. xxx.)

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* I take the covenants here mentioned, to relate most immediately to the covenant made with *Abraham*, which, on account of its various articles and promulgations, is styled, in the plural number, the covenants, but which are indeed only so many explications and enlargements of that original covenant which God made with him when he first called him, and said, (*Gen.* xii. 2, 3.) *I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee,—and thou shalt be a blessing;—and in thee, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* And I chuse to confine my thoughts to *Abraham's* covenant, that we may the better distinguish it from the law; though that was delivered in the form of a covenant at mount *Sinai*, but could not disannul the covenant made with *Abraham*; (*Gal.* iii. 17.)

and to distinguish it from the promises, both of which are mentioned in the close of this verse: I have accordingly given such a sense of the law, and the promises, as may not interfere with the things contained in the covenants, which, by the expositors I have seen, are too much confounded.

† This sense of the promises keeps up a proper distinction between them and the covenants; preserves a natural order in the privileges here mentioned; and stands in close connection with the giving of the law, and the service of God; and it seems best to suit the apostle's design of obviating the objection, ver. 1, as though because of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, the word of God had taken no effect.

5 Whose are the
fathers, and of
whom, as concern-
ing the flesh, Christ
came, who is over
all, God blessed for
ever. Amen.

5 In fine, to crown all, This present generation of the *Jews* are the posterity, not only of *Jacob*, from whose most honourable name they are called *Israelites*, (ver. 4.) but also of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *David*, and many other eminent and holy men: And from them the promised Messiah himself descended in his human birth, in so much that, as far as relates to his assumed nature, he was properly their seed, of *Jewish* extract; even he, who, in his original nature, is, in the strictest notion of deity, God, infinitely possessed of all possible blessedness, beyond all that is, or can be enjoyed by any mere creature whatsoever; and who is exalted, in his own being and perfections, *above all blessing and praise*, (Neh. ix. 5.) and is absolutely worthy of the highest adorations of saints and angels, invariably, and for ever, as having, in that view of him, no god above him*: In testimony of which, and of our desire that he may be honoured accordingly, we, who believe, heartily say, *Amen*: And may all, that hear of him, join their *Amen* with ours!

6 Not as though
the word of God
hath taken none
effect. For they
are not all *Israel*
which are of *Is-
rael*:

6 But though the greatest part of the *Jews* of this age are in a deplorable condition, through their own unbelief, which, as I have said, (ver. 2.) moves my tenderest grief and compassion for them; yet we are not to imagine, as some may suppose, on account of their great external privileges, (ver. 4, 5.) that the covenant of promises, which God made with their fathers, and their seed, is disannulled, or has failed of its accomplishments†: For all the natural offspring

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* Over all, God blessed for ever, is manifestly a description of Christ in his divine nature, by way of antithesis to, or in distinction from, the description of him, in the former part of this verse, in his human nature; and not a description of his office-power, in distinction from his person, abstractly considered: For his office-power was given him, as God-man, in both natures; whereas his being called God over all, blessed for ever, is a description of him only as to one nature, in distinction from the other: And here two characters that are peculiar to deity, and ascribed to God absolutely, and to God the Father particularly, are united in Christ; one is that of over, or above all, (Eph. iv. 6.) and the other is that of blessed for ever. (Rom. i. 25. and 2 Cor. xi. 31.) This therefore is as high and strong an attestation to the proper supreme divinity of Christ, above which there is no other deity, as words can well express. And it seems to me, that nothing can be a more forced construction

of the words, or more foreign to the apostle's design of pouring out the mournful sense of his heart for the *Jews*, than to make this clause a doxology to God the Father, as some would have it. (See this text further explained and vindicated in my sermons upon it, entitled *Jesus Christ God-Man*, pag. 26.)

† As what the apostle here enters upon, in vindication of God's chusing some and rejecting others, seems to have taken its rise and occasion from chap. viii. 28. where he had spoke of them that were emphatically the called, according to God's purpose; so the way, in which he here, and in the next verses, sets out and goes on with that design, by distinguishing between one and another sort of *Israelites*, and seed of *Abraham*, carries a strong intimation, that he does not confine his view to what is merely national and external, but rather begins with a personal distinction, which was made in the purpose of God between the believing and unbelieving *Jews* themselves.

offspring of *Jacob*, who, as such, belong to the nation and visible church of *Israel*, are not the true *Israelites*, in God's account, that are interested in the saving blessings of the covenant, according to his intent and meaning in its indefinite promises, which had a peculiar relation to, and were to have their accomplishment in, the spiritual seed of *Abraham*, of what nation soever they be, as has been observed. (*Chap. iv. 16, 17, 18.*)

7 Neither because they are the seed of *Abraham*, are they all children; but in *Isaac* shall thy seed be called.

7 Nor are the *Jews*, in a saving and spiritual manner, the children of God, merely because they are descendants of the faithful *Abraham*, as their father according to the flesh: But the promise, in its most peculiar and beneficial design, belonged to those only of his race that are partakers of his faith, and walk in his steps; (*chap. iv. 11, 12.*) as was intimated in a typical distinction which was made between one sort of *Abraham's* seed and another, when, upon God's making his covenant with him and his seed, he said, (*Gen. xxi. 12.*) *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*; that is, not from the loins of *Ismael*, thy son by *Hagar* the bond-woman; but from *Isaac*, whom *Sarah* the free-woman has bore to thee, (*Gal. iv. 22.*) shall thy children be called to partake of spiritual, internal, and everlasting, as well as of temporal and outward benefits, according to my promise. (*Gen. xvii. 7, 8.*)

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

8 The true meaning of this is, that as *Ismael*, the son of *Hagar*, a young woman, was born in her teeming age, according to the usual course of nature, without any extraordinary interposition of God; and *Isaac* was born of *Sarah*, who through faith received strength to conceive seed, (*Heb. xi. 11.*) by a miraculous influence according to, and in virtue of, the promise, (*Gal. iv. 23.*) after she was past age, and, though so long married, never had conceived before: So they who, as typified by *Ismael*, are only *Abraham's* seed according to the flesh, and glory in their privilege of having him for their father, (*Jobn viii. 33, 39.*) who also put confidence in the flesh, and seek to be justified by something of their own; these are not the children of God by special and effectual grace, whom he designs for glory; (*chap. viii. 17.*) but they who, as typified by *Isaac*, are begotten to God by his own almighty power, and sovereign will, according to, and by means of his word, (*Jam. i. 18.*)

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Selves, with regard to saving, together with external privileges: And so covertly and gradually advances to the national rejection of the *Jews*, and calling of the *Gentiles* in their stead, till he comes more openly, directly, and confinedly to insist upon that point at *chap. xi. 11, &c.* See the note there.

18.) without any regard to merit or worthiness in them; or *who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, (John i. 13.) and who lay hold by faith on the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ; these are to be reckoned the true spiritual seed of *Abraham*, who are blessed with him, (Gal. iii. 9.) and in whom the promise made to him and his seed is fulfilled, in a peculiar manner as it was in *Isaac*.

9 For thus the promise runs, (Gen. xviii. 10.) which limited the blessing to one sort of *Abraham's* seed, to the exclusion of the other, and by virtue of which *Sarah* became the mother of *Isaac*, even now, without delay, notwithstanding all the impossibilities that may seem to lie against it, I will come in the grant of my mercy, and by a supernatural operation of my providence, to enable your wife *Sarah* to conceive a son; and, according to the usual time from conception to the birth, about nine months hence, she shall certainly be delivered: And so God made a sovereign distinction between *Ismael* and *Isaac*, as types and samples of what he would do between others of *Abraham's* posterity.

10 And this distinction was made, not only between the immediate offspring of *Abraham*, which, perhaps, some may suggest, was owing to *Ismael's* being the son of an *Egyptian* bond-woman, and more perverse in his temper than *Isaac*, who was miraculously born of the free-woman; (Gen. xxi. 9, 10.) but there was afterwards, in the next descent from *Abraham* by *Sarah* herself, a further limitation, which could be ascribed to no moral difference relating to the subjects themselves; and that was, when *Rebecca*, *Isaac's* wife, was with child of two sons, which she had by one conception, and which were begotten by one man, even *Isaac*, her husband, who was the progenitor of the whole nation of the *Israelites*: Though these children were the immediate fruit of the bodies of the same father and mother, and were in all circumstances alike; yet God also made an early and sovereign distinction even between *them*, according to the good pleasure of his will.

11 For, while these infants lay alike together in the womb*, both of them indeed *shapen in iniquity*, and

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* Though to shew that there was no moral difference between these children, to move God to chuse one rather than the other, but that it proceeded from the mere good pleasure of his will, it is said that neither of them had actually and personally done any good or e-

vil, in consideration of which God had distinguished one from the other in his kind regards; yet this rather supposes, than denies, that they were equally involved in the guilt and depravity of original sin, which was common to them, as it is to all the seed of the first fallen covenant-head:

born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)

and conceived in sin, (Psal. li. 5.) and incapable, as all mankind are since the fall, of being born righteous and holy; (Job. xiv. 4. and xxv. 4.) yet before either of them was brought forth into the world, and consequently before they had, or could have done any act of a moral nature in their own persons, whether good or bad, to engage God to regard one more than the other: Even then, he declared that he had made, and would make a difference, in preferring one to the other, (*in*) to the end that his eternal purpose might be unchangeably established and fulfilled, according to his own free choice of one of them, rather than of the other: Not as though he was moved thereunto by a consideration of any good works † that he foresaw one of them would do, rather than the other; for this, in effect, would have been the same thing, as if they had been already performed; and had it depended on their own will, it must have been uncertain, whether God's choice would stand firm, or not: But, to prevent its being defeated by the corruption and fickleness of the creature,

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covenant-head: And without supposing this concerning them, as well as others, it is no easy matter to account for what is immediately afterwards said, with reference hereunto, ver. 13.—18. about God's *hating Esau*, and *having mercy and compassion on whom he will have mercy and compassion*; or to clear his *righteousness*, and make the instance of Pharaoh pertinent to the argument in hand: For God's *hatred, mercy, and compassion*, must have some relation to sin and misery, in the objects of them; and *righteousness* or *unrighteousness* in God has a reference to his dealing with men on account of *sin*: Accordingly, in the winding up of the argument, the apostle considers *the vessels of wrath*, as *endured with much long-suffering*, and *prepared for destruction by the sin* which God finds in them; and *the vessels of mercy*, as prepared by his *own pardoning and renewing grace*, according to his eternal design in which he laid them out for glory, that *his purpose according to election might stand*.

* Here is a strong intimation against the pre-existence of souls, which, on that supposition, might have done either good or evil before they were born into this world.

† I cannot see to what end the apostle should mention their having done either good or evil, antecedent to the purpose of God about them, and thereupon

add, that it was *not of works*, unless he designed to exclude all good works *foreseen*, as well as actually performed, from being the cause of God's gracious purpose concerning one, rather than the other of them, since the purpose itself was antecedent to the *existence* of either of them: And to suppose otherwise, would be not only to make the *purpose according to election* precarious, instead of firm and stable, as depending on the previous uncertain free will of the creature, and not on the free grace of God, which alone can make the promised inheritance *sure to all the seed*, (chap. iv. 16.) but it would be likewise inconsistent with the apostle's ascribing it, in the next words, entirely to *him that calleth*; and it would be directly contrary to what he afterwards offers, in support of his argument, by introducing God, as saying to Moses, verse 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*; and by drawing the inference from thence, ver. 16. *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*: Nor would this supposition leave any room for the *objections* that are raised, (ver. 14, 19.) against what the apostle had said on this head, or comport with his answers to them in the verses there following.

ture, it is an *election of grace*, (chap. xi. 5.) which proceeded from the mere good will and pleasure of God's, who effectually *calls*, according to his purpose. (Chap. viii. 28.)

12 As a specimen and evidence of this, when *Rebecca*, the mother of these twins, was quick with child, and felt them struggling in an uncommon manner within her, (Gen. xxv. 22, 23.) she sought the Lord to know the meaning of it, and received for answer, that the heads of two nations, which were typical of two sorts of seed, viz. *The children of the flesh*, and *the children of the promise*, (ver. 8.) were in her womb; and that he had determined, of his own good pleasure, that, contrary to human ways of judging, the younger should be preferred to the elder†; in

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* Here is, I think, a plain reference to what the apostle had said, (chap. viii. 28.—30.) about God's *calling* persons, according to his purpose, and glorifying them, whom he predestinated and called. That seems to be the foot of, and to have given rise to, the present discourse; and the *calling* there intended was an *effectual* one, unto a participation of spiritual and eternal blessings, (see the note there) the apostle's mentioning *this*, as well as the former instance of *Isaac*, can hardly be taken in a just and pertinent light, without considering it as an explication of what he there so clearly expressed: And therefore it appears to me, that his design in alledging them was, not merely to represent God's purpose as taking place, according to election, with respect to the *external* privileges of the gospel, to which he had chosen and called *whole nations*, and bodies of men, and particularly the *Gentiles*; but likewise with respect to *saving* and *eternal* benefits, to which he had chose *certain persons* out of such bodies. Accordingly we find that he speaks of a distinguishing choice, and separation of some from among the general bodies of *both Jews and Gentiles*, ver. 6, 7, 8, 24, 25, 26, 27, and of a *gracious election* of a *remnant*, to the obtaining of salvation, out of the body of that ancient people whom God had chosen to *external* privileges; (chap. xi. 4, 5.) And then, having gradually led the way to it, in what he had said about the sovereignty of divine grace, in its actings toward multitudes of both *Jews and Gentiles*, he proceeds at the 11th verse of that chapter, to discourse more *directly* about the *national* rejection of the

Jews, and calling of the *Gentiles*. (See the note there.) The want of a due attention to these things, and to what has been observed in the note on ver. 6. about the way of the apostle's entering on this discourse, by distinguishing between the natural and spiritual *Israelites*, and children of *Abraham*, has, I doubt not, misled many expositors to make the argument in this *ninth* chapter one and the same with that of the *eleventh*: And yet a late paraphrast, who earnestly contends for that scheme, tells us, that the *eleventh* chapter, relating to the *national* rejection, is prophetic of what the apostle foresaw would soon be, but was not yet a *fact*. But what the apostle insists on in this *chapter*, plainly relates to facts that were already actually come to pass at the time of his writing.

† *The elder's serving the younger*, was fulfilled in a *spiritual* and *mystical* sense in their *own persons*, when the birthright, and the spiritual blessings pertaining to it, were transferred from *Esau* to *Jacob*; when *Esau* was cut off from God's covenant, and *Jacob* continued in it; and when *Esau* lost, and *Jacob* got the promise of *Canaan*, that eminent type of the heavenly inheritance: And so whilst *Esau's* being doomed to servitude was a badge of the curse upon him, (Gen. iii. 16, 19. and ix. 25.) *Jacob's* title to the promised land was an emblem of his being inrolled in the *general assembly*, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. (Heb. xii. 23.) And it was likewise fulfilled in a *literal* sense, in their respective distant posterity, when, in after-ages, the *Israelites*, that descended from *Jacob*, subdued

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness

in token of which, the son, of whom she would first be delivered, should be a servant to the other, who should be born last of the two.

13 And we have a further testimony, that may be accommodated to this purpose, as it is recorded in *Malachi* i. 2, 3, where God says, I have set my love upon Jacob in a free and eternal choice of him for myself, that I might recover him from all the ruins of the fall, and give him the spiritual, as well as temporal blessings of the first-born: But I, who have a right to place, or withhold my undeserved kindness as I please, have determined to leave *Esau*, among many others of the apostate sinful race of mankind, whom I justly abhor, as such, to the free choice of his own will, that he may walk in the way of his own heart *: I will not favour him with my recovering and saving mercy, as I do the objects of my special love.

14 If this be God's sovereign way of making such a wide difference, in his original choice, according to his good pleasure, between persons that were themselves

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subdued the *Edomites* that were of *Esau's* race. (2 *Sam.* viii. 14. and 2 *Chron.* xxv. 11, 12.) But the covenant-right to all this was primarily made over to Jacob himself. (*Gen.* xxvii. 37.)

* It is pleaded by some, that God's loving Jacob, and hating Esau, did not respect them personally, but only their posterity, and had a relation not to their eternal, but only their temporal concerns; and that *Malac.* i. 2, 3. from whence these words are quoted, represents it in this light. But, as I apprehend, that the subject of the apostle's discourse, all along in the preceding chapter, is about internal and saving benefits, and he begins this chapter with a lamentation, that the greatest part of the *Jews* were not effectually called, it seems incongruous to suppose, that when he comes to account for this, by shewing that God had chosen and called some, and rejected others of the natural seed of Abraham, (ver. 6, 7.) and proceeds to illustrate it, by the distinction that was made between one and another of Abraham's and of Jacob's immediate offspring, he should entirely drop the consideration of spiritual and eternal blessings, and confine his thoughts to those that were only external and temporal; and yet that, after all this, in winding up his argument, (ver. 22, 23.) he should apply it to the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and to the vessels

of mercy, which God had afore prepared unto glory: And were we to restrain the apostle's sense of God's loving Jacob, and hating Esau, to what is said in *Malachi*, about his laying *Esau's* mountains and heritage waste for the dragons in the wilderness, it would be so foreign to the apostle's design, that it would not come up to so much as an instance of any religious privileges at all, though but of an external nature, being granted or denied to any person, or body of people whatsoever: And it is observable, that the apostle does not go so far in his quotation, as to take in the last words in *Malachi*, they not suiting the purport of his present argument. Why then should we not understand the passage, as far as he quotes it, in an accommodated sense, suitable to the tenor of his discourse, as signifying Jacob and Esau personally considered; and so giving us leading examples of a personal election of some to all the blessings mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and of God's passing by others? Since these two persons are mentioned by name, and the event proved, that Jacob was a good man, who was blessed with spiritual blessings, and is now in heaven (*Luke* xiii. 28.) and Esau is spoken of as a profane person, who sold his birthright, and all the spiritual, as well as temporal blessings pertaining to it. (*Heb.* xii. 16.) See also the foregoing note on ver. 12.

themselves alike, without the least regard to any thing done personally by themselves, whether it be good or evil, what shall we then think or say of this method of his proceeding *? Shall it be hence inferred, as some objectors would suppose, that there is any injustice in the great and holy God, as to his thoughts, designs, and dispensations toward the children of men, in receiving some, and rejecting others, that were before in equal circumstances? No, by no means: (*μὴ γένοιτο*). Far be it from us to entertain such a shocking thought, so directly contrary to his perfections, and to his government of the church and world. He doth injury to none, in distributing, or with-holding his free favours just as he pleases; because he is debtor to none.

14 For he saith
Moses, I will
have mercy on
whom I will have
mercy, and I will
have compassion on
whom I will have
compassion.

15 As to his *shewing favour* to some, rather than others, that are equally undeserving of it, there can be no injustice in this; he having an undoubted power and liberty in himself to bestow his bounteous grace, as seems good in his sight: And the *Jews*, of all people, cannot reasonably object against this, if they attend to what God declared to their own famous law-giver, with regard to his unmerited and forfeited kindness to their fathers: For, to maintain the glory of his prerogative in displaying his goodness, he said to *Moses*, in an absolute and sovereign strain, (*Exod. xxxiii. 19.*) † *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious; and will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy*; that is, my shewing mercy and pity to any persons whatsoever, is merely an act of mine own good pleasure; I will be gracious and compassionate to those among the sinful, unworthy, and wretched race of men, to whom I choose to be gracious and compassionate, for reasons found in myself, and not in them, that I may have the entire glory of it, as the absolute Lord and disposer of my free gifts.

16 So then it is
not of him that
willeth, nor of him
that runneth, but
of God that shew-
eth mercy.

16 It therefore (*ἀγα. vi*) appears from hence, that as it was not owing to *Jacob's* desiring the blessing, and running to prepare venison for his father, which *Esau* did, as well as he, (*Gen. xxvii. 3, &c.*) that *Jacob* obtained it; but it was merely from God's own good pleasure, who determined in his free mercy to confer the blessing upon him, rather than upon *Esau*, and thereby made a distinction between one and another of *Abraham's* natural posterity: (see the

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* There would have been no occasion for this objection, if God's proceedings herein had been in consideration of good works foreseen in one, and wickedness in the other. † This is cited by the apostle exactly as it stands in the *Seventy*, which entirely agrees in sense with the *Hebrew*.

note and paraphrase on ver. 13.) So the purpose of God, according to election, (ver. 11.) is not to be attributed to any one's own free will, good dispositions and desires; nor is it to be ascribed to his own diligent endeavours and inquiries after salvation; for these are the *effects*, and not the *cause* of God's choice: (2 *Thess.* ii. 13, 14.) But it takes its original rise only from the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who shews mercy to some, and not to others, as seems best to him; and who, in the greatness of his mercy, works in them both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, (Phil. ii. 13.) and makes them a willing people, in the day of his power; (Psal. cx. 3.) even when he comes effectually to call them by his grace, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; (ver. 24.) and so he gives them the blessing, though not for, yet in the way, and by means of, their desiring, and seeking it; even as *Jacob* obtained his father's blessing in that way. (*Gen.* xxvii. 18, &c.)

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

17 And then, as to God's refusing favour to some whilst he extends it to others, that were no more worthy of it than they, there is no room for a pretence of unrighteousness in this; and the *Jews* themselves must own it, if they consider what is recorded again in the writings of *Moses*: For the great *Jehovah*, as we find him speaking with awful majesty in the scriptures of the Old Testament, which were indited by his Spirit, said to the notoriously tyrannical *Pharaoh* who was the same by nature with the rest of the apostate race of mankind, and so was as undeserving of favour as others*, I exalted you to all the gran-

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* What is here alledged in a quotation from *Exod.* ix. 16. about God's raising *Pharaoh* up for this purpose, that he might shew his power in him, relates, not to God's creating him, or bringing him into being; but to his raising him to the throne of *Egypt*, and continuing him in that exalted station, for some length of time, in the midst of all his cruelties and oppressions on one hand, and of the various judgments which were ineffectual to reclaim him on the other. Accordingly, the Hebrew word (העמדת) signifies, I have established thee, or made thee to continue, or stand; and is rendered by the Seventy (διηγινόν) Thou hast been kept, or preserved; and the word used by our apostle (ἐξήγαγον) signifies, I have exalted or advanced thee to this end, viz. that God might manifest his power in exemplarily punishing him for the wickedness which he knew *Pharaoh* would

commit when left to himself; and he might give a solemn warning to others. We may further observe, that it was *Pharaoh* personally, and not to him as the *Egyptians* his subjects, that God said, I have raised thee up, to shew my power in thee, &c.; and so it is a proper sample of God's righteous and sovereign dealing with particular persons, whom he rejects for their sins. And the word power (δυναμς) is here used, as it sometimes is in other places, in the same sense with another word, (ἐξουια) which is likewise rendered power, but properly signifies authority in ver. 21. where the apostle speaks of the potter's power over the clay; and so it denotes the uncontrollable prerogative and dominion which God exerted in his acts of power upon *Pharaoh*: And as this instance of exercising his sovereign authority, in his righteous dealing with *Pharaoh*, is mentioned in opposition to his shewing

deur of the *Egyptian* throne, and preserved you alive for a considerable time; bearing with you in my long-suffering and patience, (*ver. 22.*) while you persisted in your obduracy, and cruel outrages against my people, and would not attend to the voice of my judgments, and my kinder messages to let them go: And this I have done in the disposal of my providence, for this very end and purpose, (*οτι*) that I might the more illustriously display my prerogative, and indisputable right, of dealing with you according to your deserts, by memorable acts of my tremendous power, to bring down your haughty spirit, and by performing those mighty works, that will be occasioned by your stubbornness and rebellion, till I shall utterly destroy you; And as *I have made all things for myself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil;* (*Prov. xvi. 4.*) so my ultimate end in these my awful dispensations toward you is, (*οτι*) that my being, perfections, and providence, may appear with solemn glory through the whole world*; that my patience and justice toward mine enemies, and my faithfulness, mercy, and grace, toward mine own people; and that my wisdom and power in both, and in making *the wrath of man to praise me, and restraining the remainder of it,* (*Psal. lxxvi. 10.*) may be conspicuous, and proclaimed among all nations of the earth; as well as that the *Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.* (*Exod. xiv. 4.*) Now though God might, if he pleased, have dealt otherwise with *Pharaoh*; yet as he is sovereign Lord of all, and doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, (*Dan. iv. 35.*) who shall say that there is any unrighteousness in all this?

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will

18 From these instances therefore (*αρα*) we may justly conclude, that God extends his mercy to such

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1. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will* is a pertinent answer to the objection, as if God were *unrighteous* in his different way of proceeding with persons in like circumstances, *ver. 14.* it seems necessary to consider *Pharaoh* as in the same fallen condition, by nature, with the rest of mankind, and so of the *same lump*; that is *subjectively* capable of being made a vessel unto honour, or unto dishonour, as it is expressed, *ver. 21.* Unless we take it in this light, it will be extremely difficult to clear *the righteousness of God*, in his raising up *Pharaoh* to his dignity, and continuing him in it, for *this very purpose, that he might shew*

his power in him, which issued in his utter destruction, and is called God's *showing his wrath*, *ver. 22.*

* God's name is declared in manifestations of his glory. We accordingly find that a song of praise was offered by *Moses* and *Israel* for the glorious appearances of his power, which was exercised in a way of mercy and faithfulness to them, and in a way of dreadful justice to *Pharaoh* and his host at the Red-sea; (*Exod. xv. 1.—21.*) and the world rang of the vengeance which he took upon *Pharaoh*, and of the wonderful deliverance which he wrought for *Israel*. God hereby became *terrible to the Heathen*, and his name was known by the judgment he executed. (*Psal. ix. 16.*)

he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.

such sinful and miserable creatures, as he pleases, according to the counsel and determination of his own gracious will, as he declared to *Moses* concerning his people of old: (ver. 15.) * And whom he sees fit, in

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* The former part of this verse has a manifest reference to what had been mentioned (ver. 15.) of God's saying to *Moses*, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, &c. and the latter part refers to what had been rected of God's words to *Pharaoh*. (ver. 17.) And as the apostle here speaks of God's *hardening whom he will*, in answer to an objection, as though he were *unrighteous* in his dispensations, (ver. 14.) we may be sure the apostle did not mean, that God infuses, or puts a principle of hardness into any man's heart, or hardens it by any *positive* act upon it: For that would be to make him the author of sin, and to charge the worst of all unrighteousness upon him. But all hardness of men's hearts proceeds originally from themselves, from their own allowed aversion to God, and inclination to sin, as fallen creatures, and from their wilfully indulging their evil dispositions in repeated acts, and in a continued custom of sinning, which naturally increase the stupidity and insensibility of their hearts God-ward, to which he may righteously give them up, according to what he said of the idolatrous *Israelites*, (Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12.) *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts; and they walked in their own counsels.* Hence sinners are often said to *harden themselves against God*. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Neh. ix. 16, 17, 29. Job. ix. 4. Jer. vii. 26. and xix. 15.) And it is said expressly three times over, that *Pharaoh hardened his own heart*, (Exod. viii. 15, 32. and ix. 34.) When therefore the scripture speaks of God's *hardening* any one's heart, as he said he would the heart of *Pharaoh*, (Exod. iv. 21. and vii. 3. and xiv. 4.) we may learn from the history of that case how it is to be understood. He withheld his softening grace from *Pharaoh*, or did not please to give him that grace, which, had God seen fit, might have prevented, or taken away, the natural and contracted hardness of his heart, but delivered him up, in a judicial manner, to the proud, perverse, and wicked inclinations of his own heart, under the power of which he said, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice*

to let *Israel* go? (Exod. v. 2.) And this is what is called God's giving persons over to a reprobate mind, &c. because they did not like to retain him in their knowledge: (Rom. i. 24, — 28.) He likewise suffered *Satan* still further to harden *Pharaoh's* heart by the magicians imitating some of those miracles which were wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron*; upon which we are told *Pharaoh's* heart was hardened, neither did he hearken to them at all; (Exod. vii. 22.) and so the god of this world blinded his mind, as he doth the minds of them that believe not; (2 Cor. iv. 4.) and as doth the man of sin, whose coming is after the working of *Satan*, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved. (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.) God furthermore used such external methods in his providence, as were good in themselves, but as *Pharaoh's* perverse heart turned into occasions of hardening itself yet more and more; such as God's so soon removing several of his judgments, and so long forbearing to execute the fierceness of his wrath upon him.

Accordingly, as soon as the frogs died, it is expressly said, when *Pharaoh* saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, (Exod. viii. 15.) and when the swarm of flies was removed at one time, and the thunder and hail ceased at another, we are told that *Pharaoh* hardened his heart, and sinned yet more; (Exod. viii. 31, 32. and ix. 34.) and so, as the wise man observes, (Eccles. viii. 11.) *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil;* or, as the apostle speaks of some, (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) *They despise the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads them to repentance; but, according to their hardness, and impenitent heart, treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*— Now surely, there can be no unrighteousness in any of these divine dispensations: Not in God's withholding the grace which he is under no obligation to give:

his awful sovereignty, to pass by, among the wretched objects of a sinful race, he leaves to the natural and chosen obstinacy, stupidity, and rebellion of their own hearts; and upon their wilfully persisting therein, against warnings, cautions, and patient trials, as in the case of *Pharaoh*, (ver. 17.) he, at length, in his righteous judgment, delivers them up to a judicial hardness, as the result and desert of their own impetuous and unbridled passions, and of the devil's power over them, who, in conjunction with the depravity of nature, disposes and determines them to turn all God's dispensations, even of mercy and long-suffering toward them, into occasions of the most resolute and unrelenting obstinacy against him.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?

19 One or other of you, perhaps, may be ready to object yet further against the sovereignty of God, in bestowing his special, distinguishing, and preventing grace on some, and with-holding it from others; and may say to me, Why is he offended at, and why doth he reprove, threaten, and condemn, any of his creatures for their obstinacy and hardness of heart, as he doth in the scripture? Can this be right and reasonable? For since he has resolved to let some sinners take their own course without controul, who among them all has so stood up against him, as to hinder, or defeat his determination about them? what room therefore has he still to complain of, and accuse them? (τι δὲ μισήσται)

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God, shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

20 But durst any of you indeed venture to cast such a bold reflection on God's sovereign, wise, and holy dispensations? O contemptible, sorry, worthless man, who hast rational faculties, and art accountable to the great God, and art as nothing before him, yea, who, as a fallen creature, deservest no good, but all evil at his hand, Think how insolent and saucy it is, for such an one as thou art, to talk at this daring rate, not barely against my reasonings, but against the great God himself, and against his own express declarations, which I have been reciting, (ver. 15, 17.) and which the *Jews*, who are the chief objectors on this head, must own to be of divine authority, whatever they think of me. Who art thou, poor mushroom of the earth, and guilty wretch before

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give: Not in his delivering men up to the evil way of their own chusing: Not in his suffering Satan to blind and harden them, that have lifted into his service, and take pleasure in doing his will, in opposition to God: Nor in relieving them in distress, and exercising great long suffering, patience, and forbearance

toward them, under high provocations, before he brings utter destruction upon them: And therefore all the fault lies in the hardened sinner himself; and so far as God is concerned in hardening, it is in such a negative and holy manner, as shews that there is no unrighteousness in it, nor any just ground of complaint.

fore God? or what dost thou vainly imagine thyself to be, that thou shouldest ever presume to arraign the awful Majesty of heaven at thy bar, to call him to an account, and pass such a reproachful censure on his proceedings? What! shall *man*, whom God made upright, but who has sought out many inventions, (*Eccles. vii. 29.*) pretend to quarrel with his Maker? Shall he, who is under a forfeiture, and has thrown himself into the hands of justice by sin, contend with the offended God, saying *, Why hast thou dealt more strictly with me than with some others that were in like circumstances with myself? Ah! What shocking language is this to the infinitely holy and blessed God himself! *Wo to him, that thus striveth with his Maker: Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth: Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?* (*Isa. xlv. 9.*)

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

21 As clay is, in itself, naturally capable of receiving different forms for answering divers purposes, has not a master-potter, its sole proprietor, such an absolute power and authority over it, (*εξουσία*) that he may take one parcel of it, and form it into one sort of vessel for the more honourable use of the dining-room and parlour; and may take another part of the very same mass, and shape it into another sort of vessel, for the meaner and more contemptible use of the kitchen and scullery, just as he sees fit and proper, without doing the least injury to it? How much more then must the supreme Lord, Creator, and proprietor of all, have an absolute right and authority to dispose of his creatures in a different manner, and for different purposes, as best pleases him, without being obliged to give them the reasons of it, and without the least injury to any of them; since they are all alike corrupt by nature, and so alike capable of being made to serve different uses for his glory, either in their own undeserved honour and blessedness, or deserved shame and contempt?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath,

22 Suppose then that God, having a design to display the awful glory of his righteous sovereignty,

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* That this passage, *Why hast thou made me thus?* is to be understood, not with relation to God's creating man, but to his dispensations towards him and disposals of him for happiness or misery, in consequence of the fall, appears from the whole current of the preceding and following context, which speaks, not of God's bringing persons into being, but of his giving some up, in his awful righteousness, to the wilful hardness of their

own hearts, and having mercy upon others; and of his making some vessels of wrath, and others vessels of mercy. Accordingly it is illustrated in the next verse, by the power of a potter over the clay which in its own nature was antecedently fit to be formed into different shapes, and for different uses, some of the more noble, and others of the more ignoble kind.

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ty, and dreadful power, in proper time and season, upon obstinate and impenitent sinners; and suppose, that to make this the more conspicuous and unexceptionable, when the day of reckoning shall come, he for a great while, in his abundant patience and long-suffering, bore with them, and deferred taking vengeance upon them, who by their own iniquity and hardness of heart were become proper and deserving objects of his wrath, and who, like *Pharaoh*, had fitted themselves for everlasting destruction, and therefore might have been plunged into it long before: What objection can there be against God's justice in this? since, after all their abuses of his goodness and forbearance, he only renders to them according to their due deserts; as he did to *Pharaoh* of old, (*ver.* 17.) and as he will do to the unbelieving *Jews* of this day, that shall continue to reject Christ, and his gospel, to their own perdition.

33 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?

24 Even us whom he hath called, not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*.

23, 24 And suppose that God has taken this course with them, to recommend and enhance his distinguishing grace to others, who were by nature children of wrath as well as they; (*Eph.* ii. 3.) and that he has also, in his great long-suffering, bore with his own elect, in the days of their unregeneracy, (*sa*) to the end that he might take a proper opportunity for manifesting, and illustrating the endearing riches of his glorious grace in the salvation of the objects of his mercy, whom he, in his eternal purpose and choice, laid out beforehand for blessedness and glory*, and whom he fits for that happy and holy state, in due time, by his renewing and sanctifying Spirit, before he advances them to it; doth he hereby do any wrong to others? Has he not a liberty in himself, of thus extending his free mercy to these, of what nation soever they be; as he has done even to us, whom he has effectually called by his grace, according to his eternal purpose, (*chap.* viii. 28.) not only from among the *Jews*, nor with a limitation, as formerly, to them; but from among the *Gentiles* also†:

These

NOTES.

* It is observable, that the apostle, speaking of the vessels of wrath, in the foregoing verse, uses a passive verb, calling them vessels of wrath. (*κατασκευασμένοι*) fitted to destruction: But speaking of the vessels of mercy, he uses an active verb, saying, which he, viz. God (*ὑποσημασμένοι*) has afore prepared unto glory; one intimating what the sinner is fitted for by his own iniquity; and the other, what God himself doth upon him in a way of preparation for designed happiness.

† Not of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* also, shews that here was a choosing and calling of particular persons to eternal life, out of both those bodies of people which God had chosen and called to the external privileges of the gospel, viz. the *Jews* first, and afterwards the *Gentiles*: For the body of the *Jews*, those that rejected Christ by unbelief, as well as those that received him by faith, were externally called, or, as a modern writer would have it, invited before, and

These, of whatever nation they be, are the true seed of Abraham, and the children of the promise before mentioned. (ver. 7, 8.)

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved,

25 And that God designed to call a people from among the *Gentiles*, and make them the spiritual seed of Abraham, under the gospel-state, appears from Old-Testament-prophecies; as for instance, He says, in *Hof. ii. 23.* not only with respect to the ten tribes, that had fallen off from his covenant; but likewise with respect to the *Gentile* nations among whom they were scattered, and who never had been taken into his gracious covenant, *I will call them; or say unto them, Thou art my people, which were not my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God, and I will call her beloved, which was not beloved, or I will have mercy upon her, that had not obtained mercy; that is, I will take them into my covenant, and make them my people, in due season, to serve and glorify me here, and enjoy me for ever; and I will deal with them, and own them as such; and will enable them to avouch me for their God, who before did not stand in that special relation to me, but were utter strangers to the covenant of promises: And I will shew distinguishing compassion, and loving kindness to them, in the most effectual manner, to make them partakers of all the blessings of grace and glory, who never before had found saving mercy, as the objects of my peculiar love*.*

26 And it shall come to pass, that, in

26 And in another passage of the same prophet it is said, (*Hof. i. 10.*) *It shall come to pass, that in the*

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as much as the *Gentiles*. And this may be considered as a proper key to the preceding discourse; and may satisfy us, that the apostle did not therein speak merely of the rejection of the *Jerus.* and calling of the *Gentiles* in general; but of God's exalting the riches of his free grace in saving whom he pleased among the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jerus.* whilst, in his tremendous righteousness, he abandoned the bulk of his once favourite people, for their obstinacy and unbelief; and, in his abundant mercy, had a peculiar regard to multitudes of *Gentile*-sinners.

* It seems indeed from the context in *Hofea*, and from what the apostle *Peter* writes to the believing *strangers* that were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia, that these prophecies had a respect to the elect of God, which should be called among the *ten tribes of Israel*, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. and ii. 10. But some have thought

that the apostle *Peter's* epistle was wrote to *Gentile* Christians, that were scattered through those provinces: (See Mr. *Pierce's* introduction to the epistle to the *Hebrews*.) However, that the words of this prophecy had a reference to the *beathen nations* themselves, and was to have its more eminent accomplishment in God's elect among them, may be concluded, not only from the strong terms in which they are expressed, as applicable in their fullest sense to the *Gentiles*; but principally from our inspired apostle's quoting them, as prophecies of the calling of some among the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jerus.* and so he keeps up his view toward the spiritual children of Abraham, through faith in Christ, according to the promise, of what nation soever they be, in opposition to the *children of the flesh*, that were only the natural descendants of Abraham, which he had mentioned, ver. 7, 8. See *Pocock* on *Hofea* i. 10. and ii. 23.

in the place where
was said unto
them, Ye are not
my people; there
shall they be called
the children of the
living God.

the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God; or there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God; that is, The time is coming when in those very places and countries, where it has been said to the inhabitants thereof, for many ages together, Ye are not a people in covenant with me; there shall they be brought into the number of the children of the only living and true God; they shall be called to the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and admitted to all the privileges that belong to the adoption of sons; God will not be ashamed to be called their God, and they, in the surprising riches of his grace, shall be received into his family.

27 *Esaia* also
saith concerning
Israel. Though the
number of the chil-
dren of *Israel* be as
the sand of the sea,
a remnant shall be
saved.

27 As God in these passages speaks of his intended favour toward sinners of the *Gentiles*; so it is plain from other prophecies, that, under the gospel-dispensation, he purposed effectually to call some, though, comparatively, but few of the *Jews*; and to reject the rest of them for their unbelief; as particularly from the prophecy of *Isaiah*, who (*chap. x. 22.*) speaking in the concern of his own soul, about the seed of *Abraham*, according to the flesh, and lifting up his voice to engage attention, for the alarming of some, and encouraging of others among them, said *, Though the number of the children of *Israel* by natural birth, and external privileges, be such a vast multitude, that, as the promise to *Abraham* expressed it in a proverbial way, (*Gen. xxii. 17.*) they are past account, like the sands on the sea-shore; yet, out of this innumerable company, it is but a remnant according to the election of grace, (*Rom. xi. 5.*) very few of them comparatively speaking, whom God has reserved for himself, that shall be made partakers of that salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

28 For he will
finish the work, and
cut it short in right-
eousness; because

28 That these were to be but a small remnant, compared with the rest of the *Israelites*, further appears from what the same evangelical prophet immediately adds, saying, (*Isa. x. 22, 23.*) For † God will

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finish

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* Here, and in the 28th and 29th verses, the apostle quotes two prophecies of *Isaiah*, to prove his point, with relation to the chusing and calling of a few, and rejecting the rest of the *Jews*; and here evidently a chusing of some to salvation, out of the body of the *Jews*, that were chosen to external privileges, and to be the people of God, visibly in covenant with him, in preference to all other nations of the earth.

† This part of *Isaiah's* prophecy is recited according to the *Seventy*, which is much the same in sense with the *Hebrew*; and though this prophecy, and that which follows in the next verse, seem to have had an immediate reference, one to the preservation of a remnant of the *Jews* from destruction by the *Affyrian*, and the other by *Rezin* and *Pekab*; yet as they were typical of God's elect among the *Jews*, that should be

a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

finish the account which he has laid in his eternal purpose, with regard to the calling of his elect among the *Jews* in the riches of his grace, and to his rejecting the rest for their unbelief; and he, in the way of his righteous judgment, will make quick dispatch with the carnal *Israelites* in the decreed consumption, which he will bring, like an overflowing flood, to take them away; because when the Lord comes to cast up the number of his chosen, and of others, and to balance the account between them, the remainder of the saved will be but very small, in comparison with those that shall soon be cut off from his covenant, and from the earth, in the destruction of the refractory part of the *Jewish* nation, both in this world and in that which is to come.

29 And as *Esaïas* said before, Except the Lord of *Sabaoth* had left us a seed, we had been as *Sodoma*, and been made like unto *Gomorraha*.

29 And this is still further evident from another passage in *Isaiah*, where, in a former part of his prophecy, he said, (*chap. i. 9.*) Unless the great Lord ruler, and disposer of all, who, in asserting his uncontrollable authority says, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*; (*Isa. xli. 10.*) unless he had, in the riches of his free and sovereign grace, reserved to us a spiritual seed, whom he has made the objects of his special love; and who, for number, should be but as the seed, compared with the innumerable grains of corn in the harvest: Had he not, I say, been so gracious, as to secure a remnant, such is our sinfulness, unworthiness, and provocations, that we should have been utterly destroyed, one and all without exception, as the wicked people of *Sodom* and *Gomorraha* were for their iniquities; so that it is really amazing that any are saved at all, rather than that the number of them should be, comparatively speaking, so small. From all this it appears, that it is an act of justice in God to take vengeance on the objects of his wrath, and an act of his free mercy to save the objects of his love, of whom nation soever they be.

30 What shall we say

30 What shall we then say further, to maintain the

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be saved with an everlasting salvation through faith in Christ, under the gospel-state; so the apostle considers those words, as to have a further accomplishment in gospel-days; otherwise I cannot see how they could be at all to his purpose. And it is observed by several critics that the expressions, *He will finish the work, and make a short work*, (*λεγομεν*) are metaphorical, taken from accounts, upon the balancing of which, and cutting off one part from the other, the remainder is but a small sum. Ac.

cordingly the word (*λογος*) here signifies, and is often rendered, an account, as in *Acts* xix. 40. *Rom.* xiv. 12. and several other places: And so here, and in the following verses, the apostle gives a hint of the national rejection of the *Jews*, in that the generality of them would shortly be cut off, as he also doth and had before, (*ver. 25, 26.*) of the calling of the *Gentiles*; both of which he afterwards more plainly and professedly considers, *chap. xi. 11, &c.*

say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

the *freeness* of divine grace, and clear the holy God from every charge of *unrighteousness*, in his sovereign distributions of happiness and misery; and to leave the rejected sinner *without excuse*? Surely nothing more need be added than this, That though the poor blind idolatrous heathens were so far from seeking and pressing after righteousness to eternal life, that they were utterly ignorant of it, and unconcerned about it, and made no pretences to it, but were filled with all manner of iniquity; (*chap. i. 29, &c.*) yet many, though far from the generality, of these have now, under a sense of their own guilt and unworthiness, and by a divine influence, arrived at righteousness for justification, even the righteousness of Christ, which is revealed in the gospel, as the object of faith, and is received by faith. (*Chap. i. 16.*) This shews that their salvation is entirely of grace: For as there was no shadow of their deserving it; so *it is of faith, that it might be by grace.* (*Chap. iv. 16.*)

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

31 But, on the contrary, the greatest part of the natural seed of *Jacob*, who, with abundance of misguided zeal, (*chap. x. 2.*) pursued after righteousness to justification by their own obedience to the law of *Moses*; these have fallen short of their own end therein*; they have not arrived at, or come up to, and apprehended a righteousness which answers the demands of the law, and is necessary to procure their acceptance with God to eternal life.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but

32 How, or whence, comes this to pass? It is not because they were hindered, or discouraged therein, by any secret and eternal decree of God about them,

N O T E.

* The law of righteousness signifies the righteousness of the law, and is, in the main, of the same import with righteousness in the preceding verse; where the apostle, speaking of the Gentiles, only called it righteousness; because they were strangers to the law given by *Moses*, though they had some remains of the law of nature, which was the rule of righteousness to them. (*Chap. ii. 14, 15.*) But here, speaking of *Israel*, he beautifully, and with great accuracy, varies the phrase, calling it the law of righteousness, or the righteousness of the law; because the *Mosaic* law, especially in its moral parts, was the rule of righteousness to them. And in representing how things stood with *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as to righteousness for justification, he uses several terms that were agonistical, with an allusion to racers in one of the *Grecian* games, in which, he

that was hindmost pursued, with all speed, after him that was foremost, to overtake him, and get beyond him, that he might lay hold on the prize, which was placed at the goal for the victor. (See *Dr. Hammond* on the place.) Accordingly righteousness to eternal life is spoken of as the prize, which the *Gentiles* did not pursue, or run for; (*διὸν τὰ μὲν διώκοντα*) and yet they attained or laid hold on it, (*κατήλαβον*) by a free gift of grace: And righteousness for justification was the prize which the *Jews* did pursue, or run for; (*διώκον*) and yet, not running, or *striving lawfully*, (*2 Tim. ii. 5.*) in the way of God's appointment for that purpose, they miserably fell short of it, and did not reach, or come up to that righteousness which the law requires in order to justification. (*οὐς πορεύονται δικαιοσύνης οὐκ ἔφθασαν.*)

as it were by the works of the law : for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone ;

them, which necessitates no man's will, and continues to be hid from every one with respect to himself, till events explain it ; but it is owing to their own sin and unbelief ; because, through the self-sufficiency, pride, and perverseness of their corrupt hearts, they would not, like the believing *Gentiles*, take the gospel-way of seeking and attaining the perfect righteousness which the law required, in order to their being justified, alone through faith in Christ, *who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*, (Chap. x. 3, 4.) But the carnal *Jews* who utterly rejected Christ, sought to obtain righteousness for justification merely by *, and for their own obedience to, the law, which can never answer that end : (chap. iii. 20.) And the judaizing Christians were for joining *Moses* with Christ ; and so sought to be justified, partly by the Redeemer's righteousness, and partly by their own, which was equally impossible, and was indeed seeking to be justified, in measure at least, by the works of the law, that they might have something to glory in before God : (chap. iv. 2.) For the carnal *Jews* took such offence at Christ, as utterly to reject him on account of his mean parentage and appearance, poverty and crucifixion, and the spiritual nature of his kingdom ; and the judaizing Christians, though they professed to believe in him as the Messiah, could by no means brook the thought of utterly renouncing all their own righteousness for his, and of being entirely beholden to him and grace for justification and all salvation ; and so both one and the other stumbled at Christ, and fell short of eternal life, to their own perdition, like persons that are running a race, and meet with a stone in their way, which, by hitting their foot against it †, makes them stumble and fall, to their own great hurt, and losing the prize.

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in

33 And this is no more than was likewise foretold by the prophet *Isaiah*, as may be collected from his writings,

N O T E S.

* The particle (*oc*) here rendered as it were, is sometimes *expletive*, and at others a particle of *confirmation* : But as it is likewise a particle of *similitude* ; and as it appears from the epistle to the *Galatians*, which was wrote more directly to the judaizing Christians, that they who did not pretend wholly to reject Christ, were nevertheless for making the works of the law to bear a part in justification, the apostle seems in this passage to glance at them, as being in the same case with the obstinate unbelieving *Jews*, with respect to justifica-

tion, inasmuch that Christ would be of no effect to them, and would profit them nothing ; (Gal. v. 2, 4.) and therefore I have formed the paraphrase to take in both.

† Here again is an allusion, in the agonistical strain, to a man's striking his foot against a stone, or other obstacle in his way, which occasions his falling, and losing so much ground, as to be irrecoverably distanced in his running a race, and which sorely wounds and bruises him, as well as makes him lose the prize he was running for.

in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

writings, where, in one place, (*Isa. xxviii. 16.*) * he brings in God the Father, as saying, *Behold, I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*; that is, I have laid the Messiah, as the only foundation of my church, that it may be built upon him, whom I have tried, and proved, and highly approved of, and who, being tried by those that trust in him, is also exceeding dear to them, as every way fit and qualified, like a corner stone, for uniting *Jews* and *Gentiles* in him, and supporting their dependencies upon him, who is the strength, ornament, and security of all that believe in him; and *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*: (1 Cor. iii. 11.) But, as the same prophet observes in another place, (*Isa. viii. 14, 15.*) this precious stone, which is designed and suited to this excellent purpose, will, through the pride and prejudices of the *Jews*, eventually prove to be a *stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, to both houses of Israel*; and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken; that is, many of the various tribes of *Israel*, instead of making a proper use of him, in building all their salvation by faith upon him, will take offence at him, oppose and reject him, through their own obstinacy and unbelief; and so will fall in such a terrible manner, as to dash themselves to pieces to their own confusion and ruin, like a man that wounds himself to death by running against a rock. And yet this shall not defeat the gracious design of God in laying Christ, as the foundation of the church, and in saving them that rest all their hopes upon him: For, as is intimated in one of the places before referred to, (*Isa. xxviii. 16.*) † Whosoever he be, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, a greater or lesser sinner, that quits all confidence in himself, and

NOTES.

* The apostle having proved to the *Jews* from *Isaiah*, one of their own prophets, that God had foretold, that only remnant of them should be eternally saved, and that, except the Lord, in the greatness of his mercy, had left them a remnant, they would have been universally destroyed for their iniquities, like *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. (ver. 27, 29.) He here proceeds to prove, from the same prophet, that God had foretold the offence, which multitudes of them would take in Christ, to their own utter confusion. Nevertheless, his quotation for this purpose, is not of passages as they lie in order in the prophecy of *Isaiah* itself; but of two places, which, compared together, fully make out the sense for

which he alledged them, as they both speak of Christ, though in different considerations of him: One of God's direct and immediate design in sending him; and the other of the ill use that the perverse unbelieving *Israelites* would make of him.

† The words in the prophet are, *He shall not make haste*: But the apostle gives us a very apposite sense of them in saying answerable to, though not in the exact words of, *the Seventy*, which are (οὐ μὴ καταισχυνῆται) *He shall not be ashamed*, (οὐ καταισχυνησεται) because making too much haste tends to, and commonly issues in, making a man ashamed of his enterprize, and his hopes in affairs of the greatest importance.

and depends entirely on Christ, for righteousness to eternal life, he shall not be ashamed of his adherence to him, profession of him, and expectations from him, as persons use to be, who are precipitate in their conduct, and whose vain confidences are frustrated and disappointed, through their over-haste in affairs of the utmost consequence; but the true believer's hopes shall be abundantly fulfilled, and more than answered, that he may have boldness in the day of judgment, (1 John iv. 17.)

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What exalted thoughts should we have of Christ, who, in his human nature, came of the fathers: But, in his divine nature, is God over all, blessed for ever! And how equally divine is the Holy Ghost, who sees and searches the heart, and to whom the Christian may appeal, as by a solemn oath, for the sincerity of his professions, when his own conscience bears witness to it! It is a high honour to stand in a visible relation to God, and to be partakers of the means of grace, and the external privileges of his covenant: But ah! What matter of exceeding grief is it, that any such, and especially that any of our own dear friends and relations among them, should fall short of eternal salvation! Nevertheless, the word of God's promise, and the purpose of his grace, according to election, shall certainly stand, and have their happy effects, whatever appearances there may be to the contrary. And, O how free, sovereign, and endearing is electing love, which pitched upon many sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*, before either of them had done either good or evil, and designed their effectual calling, not because they were good and ran, but merely of his own free grace, who will have mercy and compassion on whom he will have mercy and compassion, among persons alike undeserving and miserable, and causes some to will and run to saving purposes, while he passes by others, and gives them up to the hardness of their own hearts. And whatever prejudices the pride and corruption of men's hearts may raise against this sovereign way of God's procedure; yet how suitable is it to his absolute dominion, who undoubtedly has as much power over us as the potter has over the clay, to make one of the same lump, one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour! And how consistent is this with the righteousness of God, who doth injury to none, and appoints none to destruction, but on account of sin, whereby they become vessels of wrath and fit themselves for it! And as his purposes are kept secret in his own breast, the events declare them, so the rule of our duty, and of our expectation and hope, is not the secret, but the revealed will of God; and every one, without puzzling himself about secret decrees, which, for ought he knows, are in his favour, has a reasonable encouragement to follow after righteousness by faith, in hope of obtaining it, and thereby knowing and proving his election of God. How careful then should we be, that we neither quarrel with the sovereignty, grace, or justice of these dispensations, lest we be confounded for our insolence, in daring to reply against the great God; nor harden ourselves in iniquity, lest God, in his righteous judgment, should give us up to still greater, and even incurable hardness of heart; nor stumble at Christ to the rejecting of him, or joining any thing of our own with him for justification, lest it be to our own eternal perdition. Blessed be God, there is righteousness in Christ for the justification of every true believer, though of none but such. How dreadful then is their case, who, trusting at Christ, dash themselves against him as a rock of offence, while they follow after righteousness by the works of the law, and never attain it? But how happy is their case, who sincerely believe in him! They shall never be ashamed or confounded.

C H A P. X.

The apostle repeats a profession of his hearty desire for the salvation of the Jews, who had a misguided zeal for God and religion, 1,—4. Sets out the difference between the righteousness of the law, by which they sought to be justified, and the righteousness of faith, which is revealed in the gospel, 5,—11. Shews that the Gentiles stand on a level with the Jews, in the great business of justification and salvation, 12,—18. And that the Jews themselves might know this from Old Testament prophecies, 19,—21.

TEXT.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER all that I have been saying, in a faithful discharge of my office, about the rejection of so many *Israelites* after the flesh, I still, my brethren, can sincerely declare, as I have done in a solemn manner already, (*chap. ix. 1, 2, 3.*) that the most benevolent and affectionate desire (*studium*) of my whole soul, and my most earnest prayer in offering up that desire to God for them is, that, if it be consonant to his will, he would please to extend his special mercy to all of them, notwithstanding present melancholy appearances, in turning them from their iniquities, and giving them faith in Christ, to their present and eternal salvation, instead of executing his righteous vengeance upon any of them, to their utter destruction.

For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge;

2 For I really think; and, how much soever the generality of them be enemies to me, I must do them the justice to acknowledge, and declare on their behalf; and I reflect upon it, to stir up my own heart to the greater importunity and fervour in my humble pleas with God for them, that, at least, many of them are, in their way, exceeding zealous for God and his law, especially for its ceremonial parts, as I myself once also was; (*Acts xxii. 3.*) and as I said but now (*chap. ix. 31.*) they follow after righteousness in acts of obedience to that law, which they know was originally from God, and think they still observe to his glory: But, alas! they are sadly misguided in their zeal; it is all heat, without any light about the true nature and design of the law, and about the righteousness that is necessary to their acceptance with God; and, through their blind prejudices against Christ and his righteousness, their very zeal itself turns them off from him, and from the only way, which God has appointed for salvation, and in which he can be really glorified in bestowing it.

3 For they being ignorant

3 For the unbelieving and self-justiciary Jews have, through their chosen carnality and blindness, very

ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

mistaken, mean, low, and unworthy thoughts * of the essential rights of God's justice, as they are plainly discovered in his strict and high demands of universal, sinless obedience to the precepts of his holy law in thought, word, and deed, for justification, according to its tenor; (*ver. 5.*) and in the severe curse which he has denounced by it, for every the least transgression: (*Gal. iii. 10.*) And they are wilfully ignorant of that perfect and glorious mediatorial righteousness of the Messiah, which he, who is God in our nature, has wrought out, by his obedience and suffering to the full satisfaction of law and justice, and which God the Father has evidently declared his acceptance of, and makes over for righteousness to the justification of every one that believes: And for want of seeing these things in a true and spiritual light, according to the clear revelation that is made of one in the law, and of the other in the gospel, they are seeking to set up (*ζητῶντες στήσαι*) their own imperfect, ceremonial, and external performances, and are endeavouring to make them stand, as their righteousness for acceptance with God to eternal life; as if they were sufficient to answer the requirements of his law and justice, and to atone for their numberless transgressions, though, in reality, they are utterly incapable of answering those ends: And so, partly through culpable ignorance and blindness, and partly through self-conceit and desperate pride of heart, which scorns to be entirely beholden to free and sovereign grace, they have refused to stoop, and humble themselves at the foot of God so far, as to renounce all trust and confidence in their own righteousness, and to depend entirely upon that, which is brought in by Christ, and freely proposed in the gospel, for justification through faith in him; and which alone is sufficient to entitle a believing sinner to eternal life.

4 For Christ is the

4 For Christ is (*τελος*) the *perfecting* end of the

N O T E.

* It is evident to me, that by *the righteousness of God*, (*δικαιοσύνη του Θεου*) in the close of this verse, is meant that righteousness which God has appointed, provided, and exhibited in the gospel, for the justification of every one that believes: But I am uncertain whether *God's righteousness*, (*του Θεου δικαιοσύνη*) mentioned in the former part of the verse, is to be taken in the same sense; though that is the sense in which the apostle most commonly uses it in this epistle: (see the notes on *chap. iii. 5, 25.*) Or whether it is to be understood of the *justice* of God, as demanding a perfect

righteousness, according to the law, in order to a man's being justified in his sight. The *first* of these senses is most conformable to the apostle's ordinary use of this phrase; and yet the *last* seems to set the gradation of thought here in the most beautiful and least coincident light, and to be correspondent to the sense in which he may be supposed to have used this phrase in *chap. iii. 5, 26.* I have therefore considered the former clause of this verse in both these views, and leave every one to chuse that which he likes best.

the end of the law
righteousness to
every one that be-
lieveth.

moral law, for righteousness, even of that law which says, *The man that doth these things shall live by them*, (ver. 5.) as he has gone through, and fulfilled all its demands of obedience, as well as sufferings, in his life and death, to the entire satisfaction of divine justice; he is likewise the *abolishing* end of the *ceremonial* law, and has put a period to it, as all its typical offerings for purification and atonement are completely and substantially answered in him; and he is the grand designed *scope* and end, for which both those laws were given to *Israel*, as the *moral* law, by discovering their guilt and danger, and the *ceremonial* law, by shadowing out his great sacrifice, were intended to shew them their need of Christ, and put them upon flying to him for pardon and acceptance. (*Chap.* iii. 20. and v. 20. and *Gal.* iii. 24.) He is, in all these senses *, the end of the law, for the bringing in of an everlasting perfect righteousness unto the justification, not universally of all the *Jews*, nor of all the *Gentiles*, but of every one, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*, (ver. 12.) who, under a sense of his own unworthiness and obnoxiousness to divine wrath, assents to, approves of, and trusts in Christ, as the only suitable, all-sufficient, and gracious Saviour, that, through his righteousness alone, he may be accepted of God, and accounted righteous to eternal life. And it is impossible that he should be so by any legal performances whatsoever.

For Moses de-
scribeth the righ-
teousness which is
of the law. That
the man which
doth those things,
shall live by them.

5 For, as to the righteousness of the law, *Moses* himself, in his writings, (*γενεσις*) delineates and explains its strict demands, as a covenant of works, in order to a man's obtaining life by his obedience to it, when he brings God in as saying, (*Levit.* xviii. 5.) *Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them*; and (*Deut.* xxvii. 26.) *Cursed be he that confirms not all the words of this law to do them*; that is, The man, who universally and always, without the least flaw or defect in any one instance, performs all those things which the law requires, inclusive of its *moral* precepts; (*Matth.* xix. 16, 17. and *Luke* x. 27, 28.) he, and he only, shall have eternal life and happiness by it. This is a condition which no man, in his fallen state, can come up to; (*Rom.* viii. 3.) and therefore it is no wonder that they miscarry, and are disappointed,

T t t 2

N O T E.

* Though all the senses given in the paraphrase may be included; yet I am inclined to consider that, which relates to Christ's active obedience, as most directly intended, because he was the end of that law for righteousness, the righteousness of which is described in the next words, (ver. 5.) as *doing the things it commands, that a man may live by them*.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead)

pointed, who seek and hope for justification to life in this way. (*Chap. ix. 31, 32.*)

6 But, on the contrary, The language of the gospel-doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ, which is proposed to, and received by faith as *Moses* himself has also hinted, (*Deut. xxx. 11, 14.*) is after this manner *, Do not let discouraging thoughts of impossibility, about acceptance with God rise in your hearts, as they are apt to do in an awakened conscience, when it is filled with a sense of guilt and is thoroughly convinced that no righteousness of its own can avail for pardon and justification: Do not say, in a despairing manner, Who is able to climb up to heaven, and bring down from thence a Saviour to fulfil the law for us, and to expiate our sins? for Christ has already come into our nature, and our world, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

7 Nor let any of you say, in the despondency of your minds, supposing the Messiah were to come from heaven, and die for our sins †, Who could follow him into the grave, to raise him up again from the dead in token of his being owned of God to have made satisfaction to his law and justice, and in order to his being recovered to a capacity of applying his redemption to us? do not give way to such distrustful reasonings as these: For as he has already died for our sins; so he is already actually raised again for our justification: (*chap. iv. 25.*) There is therefore no such impossibility in the way of faith's coming at a righteousness

NOTES.

* In this and the two next verses the apostle refers to what *Moses* said in *Deut. xxx. 11, — 14.* On which place *Dr. Goodwin* observes, (*Vol. IV. part iii. pag. 41.*) "That though *Moses* had most of all preached the law, and given it at mount *Sinai*; and had hid the gospel under the types and shadows of legal ceremonies; yet now, when he was to die, he doth, through the Holy Ghost's coming upon him, preach the gospel, and deliver the covenant thereof clearly and plainly to the *Jews*: For you may read, in *Deut. xxix. 1.* that he calls it, the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded *Moses* to make with the children of *Israel*, in the land of *Moab*, besides the covenant which he made with them in *Horeb*: It is another covenant; and therefore the apostle pertinently quotes the words of this last great sermon of *Moses*, to distinguish the covenant of works and the covenant of grace." And it seems, from the beginning of the thirtieth chap-

ter to the sixth verse, that *Moses*, in the passages referred to by our apostle, speaks with an ultimate view to gospel-days, when God would circumcise the heart of his people, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, that they might live: So the learned *Angeworth* all along expounds those verses in his notes upon them.

† The expression in *Deut. xxx. 13.* *Who shall go over the sea for us?* And the *Jerusalem Targum* explains it thus, O that we had one, like *Jonas*, the prophet, who might go down to the bottom, or depth of the great sea! Now *Jonas*, in his descending into the deep, was a figure of Christ's lying three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, as our Lord himself applies it, *Matth. xii. 40.* And as the sea is called the deep, and the depth. *Psal. civ. 6.* and *cvil. 26.*; so *David*, prophecying of Christ, says, (*Psal. lxxi. 20.*) God would bring him up again from the depths of the earth.

righteousness in Christ for justification, as there is in obtaining it by our own personal obedience to the law.

8 But what faith is it? The word is high thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach;

8 But what is the language of the gospel-declaration about this important point? Why, the doctrine, which reveals and exhibits the righteousness of Christ to your faith, is no longer hid from you; nor is it far off; (*Deut. xxx. 11.*) but it is now plainly revealed in the gospel, and brought near unto you, even to your very doors in the ministration of it, that you may receive it: Yea, it is brought so near as to be in your mouth, when you read it, and speak of it in your prayers and praises to God, or in your confessions before men; (*ver. 9.*) yea, it is brought still nearer into your very heart, and makes effectual impressions there, when, in the application of the Spirit, you cordially embrace it. And this blessed doctrine, which is founded on divine authority, and holds forth Christ as the object of faith, and is the means of begetting faith in him, is that which we, his apostles and servants, explain and publish, propose and recommend to you, as a practicable and easy way of salvation, through the grace, that has promised to *circumcise the heart.* (*Deut. xxx. 6.*)

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

9 And, in opposition to the righteousness of the law, (*ver. 5.*) the main tenor of the gospel is this, If, on all proper occasions, in these perilous days, you, without fear or shame, shall make a free, bold, and open confession of Christ, and shall call upon him, (*ver. 13.*) with your lips, as the only Lord and Saviour, whom you receive, and on whom you entirely depend, for all acceptance unto eternal life*; and if this be not a mere verbal profession and invocation; but, answerable thereunto, you shall believe in your very heart, with such a faith, as renounces all trust and confidence in yourself, and *as works by love, and overcomes the world.* (*Gal. v. 4, 5, 6.* and *1 John v. 4, 5.*) If, I say, you in this manner shall believe, that God the Father *delivered Christ up to death for our*

NOTE.

* Dr. Whitby, in a note on this verse, observes, "That justification is here expressly ascribed to faith, and that not as including works, but only as being that principle which, when it is cordial and sincere, will certainly produce them: I say, not as including all those works, which by the gospel are required to salvation; for then the righteousness of faith must be described as is the righteousness of the law, viz. That the man who doth these things shall live in them, which is contrary

to the words of the apostle, *ver. 5, 6.*" But if justification is by faith, as a principle of works, it, in effect, is still as much as ever by works. However, if this faith, when it is cordial and sincere, will certainly produce those good works, upon which the Doctor, in a following note, rests actual and complete salvation at the day of judgment; this faith must certainly bring us now into such a right to actual and complete salvation, as shall be owned in that day to have effectually justified us.

our offences, and raised him again for our justification, (chap. iv. 25.) you shall certainly be discharged from guilt and condemnation, delivered from the wrath to come, entitled to eternal life, and, at length, brought to a full possession of it, on his account.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

10 For true and saving faith is not merely a notion in the head, nor a bare assent of the understanding to the truth of divine revelation: But it is with a man's whole heart, including the consent, approbation, and acceptance of his will and affections, that he believes in the crucified and risen Saviour, unto the obtaining of righteousness for justification, even the righteousness of Christ, which completely answers all the demands of the law, (ver. 4.) and is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. (Chap. iii. 22.) And it is with his lips and tongue*, as expressing the inmost sentiments and dispositions of his heart, that he makes a noble confession of his faith in Christ, publicly, cheerfully, and resolutely owning him in all his characters, notwithstanding the greatest terrors of this world that he may be exposed to for it; it is also with his mouth that he pleads what this great Mediator has done and suffered, as the only ground of his hope toward God, unto the obtaining of final salvation through him. (ver. 13.) And that the faith, which has such powerful effects, is of a saving nature, appears from what is recorded, even in the Old Testament.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.

11 For those inspired writings declare, (Isa. xxviii. 16.) with a view to the Messiah, as has been before observed, (chap. ix. 33. see the note and paraphrase there) that whoever he be, that receives and relies upon him by faith, whatever his former character and condition had been, will not be ashamed to own Christ, nor shall he ever be put to shame and confusion through a disappointment of his hope and confidence in him. And this holds equally true, with respect to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*,

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same

12 For, under the gospel-dispensation, the grace of God is not confined, as it formerly was, to the *Israelitish* church and nation. No, there is now no difference, as to God's free regard to, and way of justifying

N O T E.

* Though *confession* was mentioned before believing, (ver. 9.) yet here it is put after believing; to shew that the apostle meant such a confession as is the fruit of faith: And as a man's believing with the heart is said to be unto righteousness, which entitles to eternal life; so *confession* is spoken of, not as any part of

that righteousness, which gives a title to life; but as an evidence of the truth of our faith, and one remarkable way of its operating, especially in persecuting times; and as God's appointed means and method of building us up in it, and bringing us to complete salvation.

same Lord over all,
is rich unto all
that call upon
him.

tifying and saving one, rather than another, on account of his being a *Jew* on one hand, or a *Gentile*, the most polite and learned of which are the *Greeks*, on the other: For one and the same Lord Jesus *, who, as Mediator, *is given to be head over all things to the church*, (Eph. i. 22.) and is *Lord of all*, (A&S x. 36.) is inexhaustible in the riches of his merit and mercy, and is exceeding bounteous in his saving blessings unto all sorts of persons, of what rank or nation soever they be, even to all and every one, that religiously invokes and worships him, as a divine Saviour, with faith in his name; and makes a due surrender of himself up to him, and to the Father through him.

13 For whoso-
ever shall call up-
on the name of
the Lord, shall be
saved.

13 For, as was foretold in a prophecy of gospel-days, (*Joel* ii. 32.) without exception against one more than another, Whoever, be he who or what he will, as to national or personal circumstances, that shall cordially accept of Christ for his Lord and Saviour, and apply in earnest prayer to him, with an entire dependence on his mediation, righteousness, and grace, to bring him into a state of favour with God, he shall be delivered from sin and wrath, and advanced to eternal blessedness.

14 How then
shall they call on
him in whom they
have not believed?
and how shall they
believe in him of
whom they have
not heard? and
how shall they hear
without a preach-
er?

14 Since therefore the *Gentiles* are included in the gospel-design of salvation, there is no room for the *Jews* to be offended at its being preached to them; and it is plain that it ought so to be: For how is it possible that they should, in a truly religious manner, invoke him to recommend them to the divine favour, whom they have not known, received, and depended upon, by faith for that purpose? And how can they, in the ordinary course of things, accept of and trust in him, whom they have not so much as heard of in his saving offices and characters, as he is set forth in the gospel? And in what manner can it be supposed that they should hear of him, according to the divine revelation that is made concerning him, unless he be some way or other manifested by a publication of the gospel to them?

15 And how
shall they preach
except they be
sent? as it is writ-
ten, How beauti-
ful are the feet of
them that preach
the gospel of peace,
and

15 And what authority could any have to preach the word of faith, (*ver.* 8.) to them, unless they were, either immediately or mediately, sent with a divine commission for it? And their being sent of God, on this blessed errand, is so far from being a just occasion of offence, or envy to any, that it is matter of great thankfulness and joy, according to what

N O T E

* By the same Lord seems here to be meant the Lord Christ, who, in the two following verses, is spoken of, as preached, believed in, and called upon, in or-

der to that salvation through him, which the apostle had been discoursing of in the preceding context.

and bring glad tidings of good things.

what is written *, (*Isa. lii. 7.*) with a reference to *Israel's* deliverance from the *Babylonish* captivity, which was typical of a much more glorious deliverance from sin and wrath by the promised Messiah, *viz.* How seasonable, desirable and welcome is the approach; and how lovely and precious are the very feet of those messengers, that in a moral sense are undefiled, though besmeared with dirt and sweat in their travels, to proclaim the glad tidings of peace with God by Jesus Christ, and to publish all the great and good things of gospel-grace, such as justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal glory, through him? They are to be esteemed very highly in love for their works sake; (*1 Thess. v. 13.*) because they bring us a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of them. (*1 Tim. i. 15.*) So that from these prophetic passages, and this gradation of argument, it appears that there was a necessity of the gospel's being preached to the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For *Isaias* faith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

16 But as the whole body of the *Gentiles* were no more chosen to eternal salvation, than the whole body of the *Jews* were excluded from it: So all of them universally (*s. pariter universos*) have not hearkened to the gracious calls of the gospel, to entertain it, and cheerfully yield themselves up to the authority of God in it, by the obedience of faith. And this is no more than was to be expected from what is intimated in another prophecy of *Isaiab*, which relates to the calling of the *Gentiles* by the gospel †: For, says he, by way of lamentation and humble expostulation with

NOTES.

* The whole current of the following context in *Isaiab's* prophecy, leads us to understand his words in *chap. lii. 7.* as referring, not merely to the joyful messages of *Israel's* deliverance from the *Babylonish* captivity, but as looking forwards to the still much happier tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, which should be preached, and that to the *Gentiles*, in gospel-days: For in the following verses to the end of that chapter, he says, among other things, *The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God; and speaks of Christ, as God's servant, who shall sprinkle many nations, &c. ver. 10, 13.* — 15. And all along through the next chapter he describes our Lord in his sufferings, and in their saving design, in such a clear and lively view, as looks more like a history, than a prophecy of him.

† That this prophecy included a reference to the calling of the *Gentiles* in gospel-days appears, not only from the apostle's connecting it with what he had been saying, in the verses before, about the gospel's being preached to them; but also from this passage in *Isaiab's* prophecy itself, which immediately follows what was said about Christ's sprinkling many nations, who should see and consider that, which had not been told them, and which they had not heard. (*Isa. lii. 15.* and *liii. 1.*) And therefore, though it might primarily relate to the almost universal incredulity of the *Jews*, it was likewise very applicable to the *Gentiles*; since, notwithstanding the greater success of the gospel among them, it was far from being received by the generality, even of them. And, for the like reason, it may be applied to all succeeding ages, down to our own days.

with God, on account of the small number of persons of any character, that would then receive these glad tidings, (*Isa. liii. 1.*) Lord, how few are they, that by faith have given credit to, and cordially embraced the plain, affectionate, divinely inspired, and confirmed declarations, which we, the servants of the Messiah, have made of salvation through him, in comparison with those, that have heard, and yet, through the hardness of their hearts, have rejected them?

17 So then, faith cometh by hearing. They hear the word of God.

17 It therefore appears from all this, that though many, who heard the gospel, shut themselves out from its spiritual and eternal blessings by their own unbelief; yet, *hearing it*, is the ordinary means of God's appointment for working effectually, by the *revealing of his arm*, or exerting the power of his Spirit, upon the hearts of others; inasmuch that they who have believed, through grace, were brought to it at first, and are carried on, and built up in it, by this means: And hearing supposes a preaching of the gospel, which may be called the word of God, as he is the author of it, and has given commission to his servants to publish it, and as it is *the power of God to salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* (Chap. i. 16.)

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

18 But, still further to silence all cavils, against preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*, I would say, Is it not a plain fact, that they have heard the glad tidings of salvation, and that many of them have been captivated, by that means, to the obedience of Christ? Yes, they certainly have: For as our blessed Lord ordered his servants to *teach all nations; and to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;* (Matth. xxviii. 19. and Mark xvi. 15.) this has been done in a very extensive manner, and with wonderful success, in virtue of his promise, *Lo I am with you always, to the end of the world:* (Matth. xxviii. 20.) So that what David said, (*Psal. xix. 4.*) of the *heavens* preaching the wisdom, power, and goodness of God to the heathens, which had not then the benefit of divine revelation, may now be applied to the publication which is made of the gospel to them*, *viz.* The voice of evangelical preachers, proclaiming aloud salvation by Jesus Christ, has been heard far beyond the confines of *Judea*, in various parts of the earth, through all the *Roman* empire; and their ministrations have reached, even to the utmost

NOTE

* The former part of the words referred to in *Psal. xix. 4.* are, *their line is gone out through all the earth.* But the Hebrew word (*קו*) there rendered *line*, signifies likewise a *loud voice, or cry.* See Dr. Pocock's *miscel.* chap. iv. p. 48. And *that* is the sense in which the apostle here takes it.

most bounds of that vastly wide and extended dominion, which takes in the greatest part of the known regions of this world. And God's having given the gospel such an amazing spread, to the conversion of great multitudes among the *Gentiles*, is an evident testimony from heaven, that it ought to have been preached to them; and that none ought to murmur or be offended at it.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

19 But as some of the *Jewish* brethren may be apt to plead, in excuse of their prejudices against this gracious dispensation, that they always thought the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, were to be confined to their own nation, I would further say, could they indeed be ignorant, that God designed, in due season, to extend his mercy to the *Gentiles*? No surely, they easily might, and could not but have known something of it, if they had attended to what their own prophets had plainly foretold about it: For in the first place, even *Moses* himself, their great law-giver, brings God in as saying to *Israel*, when they had highly affronted him by their idolatries, (*Deut.* xxxii. 21.) *I will move them to jealousy by those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation*; that is, I, in due season, will make them see such out-goings of my mercy and favour towards a people, that at present are strangers to my covenant, as will raise the envy of the *Jews*, and give them reason to suspect my preferring the *Gentiles* to themselves; yea, (*παραζηλωσω*) I will hereby excite them to such an holy emulation, as, were they wise enough to lay it to heart, would be a proper means of preventing my utterly forsaking them. And I will make such a change in my dispensations, as, through the pride and perverseness of their own spirits, will prove an occasion of lowering their minds, and irritating their wrath and indignation against the heathens, on account of my making known the way of salvation to them, whom they always despised as an ignorant sottish people; and who may indeed well be called a *foolish nation*, as, while destitute of divine revelation, they were without the true knowledge of God; and as, amidst all their acquirements in human arts and literature, they became vain in their imaginations, and stupidly inconsiderate, and void of understanding, about their present duty and future happiness.

20 But *Isaiah* is very bold, and saith,

20 And (*δι*) still further, another celebrated prophet of latter ages, *Isaiah* by name, who said more of the

N O T E.

* How sadly this prophecy was verified, with respect to the rage and envy of the *Jews* at the conversion of the *Gentiles*, may be seen in *Acts* xiii. 45. and xviii. 5, 13. and xxii. 21, 22.

with, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

the Messiah and his kingdom than all that went before him, speaks with great freedom, openness, and undaunted courage, both of the *calling* of the *Gentiles* and the *rejection* of the unbelieving *Jews*, how offensive soever it might be to the people of that degenerate age. As to the *calling* of the *Gentiles*, he introduces the *Jehovah* of *Israel*, as saying, in a way of free and preventing goodness, (*Isa.* lxx. 1.) I, from motives taken merely from myself, and for the glory of mine own sovereign grace, was a God of salvation to them; and they, by happy experience, found me to be so, who, till I began with them by the gracious calls of my gospel, and the secret motions of my Spirit upon their hearts, did not once think of seeking, worshipping, and serving me; but, instead of that, were bowing down to dumb idols of their own invention, and thereby provoking me: And I was made known, in a distinguishing and effectual manner, by the preaching of the word, attended with the illumination of the Spirit, to them who went contentedly on in the way of their own dark and foolish hearts, and had never before so much as concerned themselves about me, or inquired after me, or how they might find favour in my sight; and who never would have done it had I left them to themselves.

But to Israel faith. All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

21 But, on the contrary, as to the *rejection* of the unbelieving *Jews*, the same prophet tells us, that God, speaking after the manner of men, said to the *Israelites*, (*Isa.* lxx. 2.) * I have used all manner of endearing and persuasive methods with them, by many gracious promises, by miraculous and indulgent providences, by the importunate expostulations of my servants, and by the secret strivings of my Spirit, time after time, to invite their returns to me; yea, I have continued to do this with unwearied earnestness and patience, like one that pleaded with them, and stood ready with open arms to receive them, from morning to night: But it has been to an obstinate and ungrateful, unbelieving and contradicting people, who, through the hardness and corruption of their hearts, have resisted my kindest overtures, and have set themselves to oppose, and even speak evil of them, when, at last, they were made by the Messiah himself and his apostles; and therefore, the day of my patience

U u u z

being

N O T E

Here is an allusion, either to the acting behaviour of an affectionate mother, who opens her arms to embrace her child, and encourage its com-

action of an orator, who moves and extends his arms, in token of his desiring audience, and of the vehemence of his address.

to her; or an allusion to the lively

being expired, I will no longer wait to be gracious to them.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How sincerely desirous are Christ's faithful servants of the salvation of their hearers! How earnest in their pleas with God for them! And how grieved that so few receive the gospel-report! They watch for their souls, and are willing to think and speak the best they can of them; but are troubled at heart, when they perceive that, through criminal ignorance, and pride of spirit, they have such light thoughts of the strict demands of God's justice, as to imagine that they can secure his favour by their own imperfect performances, and will not stoop so far, as humbly to depend on the righteousness of Christ alone for justification, through faith in him, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. How encouraging is it to think that the impossibilities of the law, as requiring perfect obedience in order to eternal life, are not now enjoined as the condition of obtaining it; but that a way of free mercy is opened in the gospel for it, and is practicable and easy to every one, who, by the power of divine grace, is enabled to believe with the heart unto righteousness! The righteousness of faith is brought near to sinners in the ministration of the word; and brought home to their very hearts in the application of the Spirit: The work of salvation is already wrought out by Christ; he has come from heaven, and fully satisfied the law and justice; and has been raised from the dead in testimony of it: Whosoever calls upon him, in a way of religious worship, as a divine Saviour, and believes in him, whether he be *Jew or Gentile*, a greater or lesser sinner, he shall never be ashamed of his hope, or confounded through a disappointment of them; and whoever, from this principle of faith, makes an honest, free, and open profession of Christ, in his person and offices, doctrine and ways, whatever it may cost him, shall certainly obtain complete salvation through him. O with what hearty welcome should they be entertained, that are sent with Christ's commission to preach this blessed gospel! It brings glad tidings of peace, and is the best news that ever came to the fallen race of men: And how great is the advantage that may be hoped for, in attendance on its ministrations! Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This is his ordinance for bringing souls to the obedience of faith; and the minister of Christ ought to be faithful, plain, and courageous in preaching the whole counsel of God, how much soever some may be offended at it. All the wisdom of the world is foolishness, compared with that which is to be learnt by means of the gospel: But God begins with us, before we begin in earnest to seek after him. What surprising grace is this! And how amazing is the patience of God towards a provoking people! He stretches out his hands to them in the ministrations of his word and gospel, and continues long to strive with them by secret suggestions of his Spirit, though they despise and oppose him; and his long-suffering often turns to salvation, after he has waited many years to be gracious. But how should sinners dread the thought of going on still to reject Christ and his gospel, lest the time of God's patience should expire; and he should remove them from the gospel, or the gospel from them, and they, before they are aware, should wonder and perish!

C H A P. XI.

The apostle shews that the rejection of the Jews is not universal; but that God's elect among them obtained salvation by grace, while the rest, through the blindness and hardness of their hearts, sett short of it, 1,—10. That God's cutting them off, as a nation, from his visible church and covenant, is not final; and that as he had overruled their unbelief, for making the Gentiles partakers of gospel-privileges in their stead; so the Gentiles ought not to insult over them, on this account; but rather take caution from them to watch against pride and unbelief, lest God, in his righteous severity, should unchurch them, as he had the Jews, who nevertheless shall, in due season, be nationally called, and brought into God's visible covenant again, 11,—32. And the whole is closed with a solemn adoration of the profound wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, in all the forementioned dispensations, 33,—36.

TEXT.

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

PARAPHRASE.

BUT from what I have been saying about God's righteous and sovereign dealing with the unbelieving Jews, shall we conclude, that, though he has said, *He will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance* (Psal. xciv. 14.) he has nevertheless universally, and for ever abandoned the whole body of this favourite nation, which has been for so many ages a people visibly in covenant with him? No, by no means; (μη γαρ ούτω) Far be it from any of us to impute such unfaithfulness to him; He has not excluded them *all* from eternal salvation through Jesus Christ: For even I myself am, by parentage, of the stock of *Israel*, being descended from *Abraham*, the father of the whole nation, and particularly from *Benjamin*, *Jacob's* youngest son, who, it is well known, was the head of one, though indeed one of the lowest and least, of the twelve tribes; and yet, instead of God's casting me off, as he justly might for my former unbelief, blasphemies, and persecutions of the church, he regarded me, as a chosen vessel; (*Acts* ix. 15.) and the grace of the Lord Jesus has been so exceeding abundant toward me, that I have obtained mercy, through him, to eternal life. (1 *Tim.* i. 13, 14.)

3 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith

2, 3 Whatever therefore God doth with multitudes of the *Israelites* after the flesh, and might righteously have done with them all, for their heinous provocations; yet he has not rejected those of his ancient people *, whom, in his eternal counsels and designs

of

NOTE.

* *His people*, which the apostle so emphatically says God *foreknew*, I think cannot

faith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

of love and grace, he distinguished from the rest, regarded as the true spiritual seed of *Israel*, and chose, not merely to external privileges, but also to special and saving benefits: But he has effectually called these according to his purpose: (*chap. viii. 28.*) So that it is now, in this day of general revolt among the *Jews*, as it was in former times. Do ye not know, and cannot ye easily recollect, what the sacred scripture has recorded concerning *Elijah*, or, in the history of that prophet, how, in his holy jealousy for God and his glory, he is represented as mournfully complaining of the ten tribes of the children of *Israel*, and as even pleading in his prayer to God against them, (*εὐρυχαυ κατὰ*) for their having generally fallen into idolatry, together with their rulers, in the apostatizing days of *Abab*? Saying, (*1 Kings xix. 10, 14.*) *Lord, they have forsaken thy covenant*, which thou madest with them; and their fathers have persecuted thy true and faithful prophets unto death; and, in the madness of their zeal for their idols, they have even demolished the altars * that were erected and dedicated to thine honour and service, for offering sacrifices to thee, as the only living and true God. And so general was the visible defection of those times, that the prophet, speaking according to his own apprehension of things, said, Such is the violence

NOTES.

cannot mean the whole nation of the *Jews*, whom he had chosen to be his peculiar church and people, in distinction from all other nations: For it is plain from the whole tenor of his discourse, that God had cast away the bulk of them; and his main argument, in the greatest part of this chapter from *ver. 11. to ver. 32.* is to prove that God had done so. But those, whom he foreknew, signifies those among that chosen body of people, whom he had, in a still more distinguishing manner, peculiarly chosen, and laid out in his eternal counsels, as the objects of his special love, that he might effectually call and save them; or, as it had been expressed, (*chap. viii. 29, 30.*) whom he so foreknew, as to have predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son, and whom, in consequence thereof, he called, justified, and glorified. (See the note there.) And they are here spoken of, in distinction from the body of the *Jews*; and are called, in the fifth and seventh verses of this chapter, a remnant according to the election of grace, which obtained, in opposition to the rest of that people, who were blinded. And this shews that in

the preceding discourse, the apostle had a respect to particular persons, as well as to the *Jews* and *Gentiles* nationally considered, in what he had said about God's saving some among the *Gentiles*, and rejecting others among the *Jews*.

* These altars could not include the altar at *Jerusalem*; for that was out of the reach of the ten tribes, who are here spoken of: But they seem to have been those which *Samuel* had erected before the building of the temple, (*1 Sam. vii. 17. and xi. 15. and xvi. 2, 5.*) and that which *Elijah* repaired. (*1 Kings xviii. 30.*) The ten tribes might probably, by God's special dispensation, offer sacrifices upon these altars, when their kings restrained them from going to *Jerusalem*, and when they nevertheless would not sacrifice to the calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, which God had forbid: And as the continuance of these altars was a public testimony against the prevailing idolatry in *Abab's* days, he and the generality of the people joined in pulling them down, and even in digging up their very foundations, that there might be no remaining traces of them to preserve their memory.

of their outrage, that I, of all thy true worshippers and servants, as far as I can find, am the only one that has survived; and the apostates are also hunting after my life to destroy it: So great is their fury, and to such an exceeding low ebb is thine interest reduced among the people of this age.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

4 But what was the answer, which God gave him under this melancholy appearance of things? It was very encouraging, and stands thus, (1 Kings xix. 18.) Notwithstanding all your saddening thoughts, as though there were none left among this people, whose hearts are right with me, and continue in my covenant, I have not given them *all* up to the evil ways, which they have been tempted to, and which their own hearts, left to themselves, would naturally have chosen; but in my gracious purpose, and by my effectual influence, I have set apart, and reserved to myself, as a peculiar property, for the praise of mine own glory, many more than you are aware of: Though, comparatively speaking, they be but few; yet they are in themselves a considerable number, no less than seven thousand, which, even in these degenerate and perilous days, have been kept from running with the multitude to do evil; and have not fallen into the common corruption and idolatry of the age, by paying any religious homage to the image of *Baal*.*

5 Even so then at this present time so there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

5 Now, to apply this to the case in hand; as it was then, so in like manner it is now. Though I have spoke of my being one of the natural seed of *Abraham*, whom God has distinguished by his grace among them, whom he foreknew, (ver. 1, 2.) I am far from thinking, as *Elijah* did, that I am *the only one* of this sort: For, notwithstanding the deplorable infidelity of the main body of the *Israelites* in this present age, there is even *now* a reserve, (*λῆμμα*) which, though it be but like a small remnant, compared with the whole, are a much greater number than may be apprehended, even many myriads of *Jews*, (*μυριάδες Ἰουδαίων*, Acts xxi. 20.) whom God has brought to believe in Christ to the saving of their souls, according to that free and eternal choice which he made of them in the riches of his own sovereign mercy and grace.

6 And if by grace,

6 And if God's choosing, calling, and saving some, rather

N O T E.

* *Baal* was an idol of the *Sidonians*, which *Abah* set up and worshipped upon marriage with *Jezebel*, the daughter of their king; and to which the generation of the ten tribes of *Israel* paid their

adorations, after the example, and in obedience to the authority, of that wicked *Abah* and his queen, as may be gathered from 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32, 33. and xviii. 21.

grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

rather than others, be properly the effect of his own mere favour or grace *, as it certainly is; (2 Tim. ii. 9.) then it is neither in whole, nor in part, owing to any sort of good works foreseen in them, or done by them, as if those works deserved it, or were antecedent motives to it: For to suppose otherwise, is to destroy the very idea of grace, which signifies entirely free and unmerited favour, as proceeding from the mere good pleasure of God, (Eph. i. 5, 6. and Luke xii. 32.) without any worthiness of its objects to induce it. But, on the contrary, if God's peculiar regard to them be on account of their good works, in any view or consideration of them whatsoever, as previously moving him to it, according to the fond conceit of proud self-justificaries; (Luke xviii. 11, 12.) then it is no longer to be ascribed merely to the free

N O T E.

* The learned Mr Locke supposes that this exclusion of works, from the notion of grace, does not extend to all manner of difference in the persons chosen, from those that were rejected; but that God, in his choosing, preferred those who were the best disposed, and most inclined to his service; and so his grace is like that of a prince, who out of rebels, whom he has reduced under his power, chooses, as vessels of mercy, those that he finds least infected with malice, obstinacy, and rebellion. And this author imagines, that without some regard to a difference in the things taken, from those that are left, it cannot be called *choice*. To illustrate which he instances in a handful of pebbles, that are taken out of a heap, and separated from the rest; but if it be without any regard to any difference in them from others that are rejected, he doubts whether any body can call them *chosen*.—But his instance of *rebels* seems to be very defective; because a sovereign may spare whom he pleases, and all good dispositions in one, more than another, are of God; and it is apparent, in fact, that some of the very worst of sinners are chosen, and consequently justified, sanctified, and saved, (1 Cor. vi. 11.) while others of fairer characters are rejected, like that young man in the gospel: (Matth. xix. 16.—12.) and our apostle, in his foregoing discourse, had represented them whom God chose, and them whom he rejected, as originally, and of themselves, in all respects equal, and ascribed God's choosing some, rather than others, merely to his *having mercy on whom he will have mercy*, in opposition to their own *willing and run-*

ning, as the cause of it. (Chap. ix. 12.—16.) Nor is the instance of taking a handful of *pebbles* out of a heap, a proper illustration of this point; for it is not to be supposed that God acts at random, or takes one rather than another, without thought, or without some wise reasons in *himself*, though there be none in *them*, why he should take one rather than another; since he *works all things according to his purpose, after the counsel of his own will*; (Eph. i. 11.) and he can glorify his grace most, by changing the hearts, and altering the tempers and dispositions of the most obstinate and rebellious, as he in fact doth of all those whom he chooses, to make them what he would have them to be, and to fit them for answering every design for which he chose them:—And as in choosing, where there was no previous difference, he pursues his great view of exalting the glory of the *sovereignty*, as well as of the freeness of his grace; so were pebbles intelligent creatures, how would those of them be affected with admiration and praise of the distinguishing favour, that should take, and separate them for the noblest purposes, rather than others of the same heap, though there was no antecedent difference between them? And were there such difference as should be the cause of God's preferring some before others, in his original choice, there would surely be some sort of *merit* or *worthiness* in them, rather than in the others, to be the reason of his choice; which would utterly destroy the apostle's notion of grace, and all his reasoning on this subject.

and undeserved favour of God : For to suppose that it were, would be, in the very nature of things, to set aside all merit of works, *that* being utterly inconsistent with the notion of free and entire grace. These things are so directly contrary one to the other, that they cannot be blended together ; but salvation, from first to last, must be simply of the one, to the exclusion of the other, as the proper moving cause of it. It must be either of *grace*, or of *debt*. (Chap. iv. 4.)

7 What then ?
Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blind.

7 What then, upon the whole, is the true state of the case ? Why, it stands, in short, thus ; The generality of the *Jews* have not obtained righteousness to justification, which they earnestly desire (*ἐπιζητοῦν*) and endeavour to acquire ; because *they seek it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law*, (chap. ix. 31, 32.) which shews that it is not to be had in a way of merit. But those of that elect nation, whom God has *chosen to salvation* *, by a mere act of his own free will, *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, (2 Thes. ii. 13.) have obtained righteousness to eternal life, through faith in him, *who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes* ; (chap. x. 4.) and the rest of the *Israelites* after the flesh, that were left to themselves according to their own deserts, (*κατὰ ἰδίαν*) became blind and stupid †, hardened and obstinate, with regard to Christ, and the way of salvation by him ; so that they stumbled at him through their own impenitence and unbelief, which leave them without excuse.

8 According as is written, God hath given them the spirit of stupidity, eyes that they could not see, and ears that they could not hear. to this day.

8 And, severe as this doctrine may seem to some, we have plain traces of it in the scriptures of the Old Testament, where instances of this kind among the *Jews* are recorded in former days, which may be considered as examples, and prophetic hints of what would come to pass in after-ages, according to what is written in *Isaiab's* prophecy : (chap. vi. 9, 10.) *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat ; and make their ears heavy, and shut their*

N O T E S.

* The abstract is here put for the concrete, the *election* for the *elect*, as the *circumcision* is put for the *circumcised*. (Chap. iii. 30. and iv. 9.) They might thus called to signify, that election was the original spring of their conversion, and of all their happiness ; and here evidently one election within another ; the more special, to saving benefits, out of another, more general, to external privileges.

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† By the strict rule of an antithesis, it would have been, *the rest have not obtained* : But the apostle rather chose to say, *the rest were blinded*, to intimate, that the proper cause of their not obtaining what they sought for, was not any decree of God about them ; but the wilful blindness or hardness of their own minds and hearts, which made them stumble at Christ to their own perdition. (Chap. ix. 32.)

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their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed; and (chap. xxix. 10.) The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes. These awful passages, are applicable to the people of these times, and plainly amount to this, That, for their resolute infidelity, God has, in a judicial manner, and in terrible righteousness, given them up to their own stupid and obdurate temper, which would not attend to his wakening and repeated warnings, but chose to sleep on, that they might take their rest, without any disturbance of their carnal security: By his thus justly withdrawing from them, and leaving them to the wickedness of their own hearts, and the power of Satan, the eyes of their minds are so blinded, that, as they would not, they shall not see the clear revelation which God has made to them of the way of their duty and happiness: And their ears are so thoroughly deafened, that, as they would not, they shall not bearken to, and be reclaimed by, the loudest voice of judgments and mercies, or the most alarming and engaging messages of his servants. (See the note on chap. ix. 18.) Thus it was of old; and thus it continues to be with many of the unbelieving Jews down to this present time.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them.

9 And the like is spoken of in a prophetic Psalm of the Messiah's days, (Psalm lxix. 22, 23.) where to shew that it is for their own abuses of God's goodness, that any are thus given up by him to the chosen way of their own perverse hearts*, David, speaking of the public enemies of God, and religion, and carrying his view forward to the enemies of Christ, says under the form of an imprecation, not with a revenge

N O T E.

* That this lxxth Psalm was prophetic of the Messiah, appears from several passages in it; as particularly from ver. 9. and ver. 21. the verse that immediately precedes those which the apostle has quoted, as they are rendered by the Seventy: For the 9th and 21st verses are expressly cited, and interpreted in the New Testament, in an application of them to Christ. (John ii. 17. Rom. xv. 3. Matth. xxvii. 34, 48. and John xix. 28, 29.) Accordingly what David said of those that were enemies to himself, who was a type of Christ, may justly be applied to the unbelieving Jews, that set themselves against the Messiah; or he may be supposed to personate Christ, in denunciations of judgments against his incorrigible enemies that crucified him:

And though the royal Psalmist might deliver these words under the form of an imprecation; we are not to imagine that they proceeded from his own private spirit, but from the spirit of prophecy, by which he then spoke; and consequently we ought not to think ourselves warranted from hence, in using any imprecations upon others, from a spirit of revenge, or under pretence of pious zeal against the enemies of Christ and religion. Besides the Hebrew verbs there used, may be and sometimes are, rendered in the future tense of the indicative mood, as well as in the imperative mood; and may be considered rather as predictions of what would be, than as imprecations of what one would wish to be. See Dr. Whitby's notes on this text.

ful temper, but by way of prediction, under an impulse of the Spirit of prophecy, As *they gave him gall for his meat, and vinegar to drink*, (Psal. lxi. 21.) Let bitterness and death mingle with all that they pride themselves in, and rate their happiness by; let the bountiful supplies of Providence, which should have been used with temperance and thankfulness, but which they have abused to the pampering of their sensual appetites, and spoiling all taste for spiritual, holy, and heavenly things, be suffered to entangle them, like silly birds in a snare: Let all that *should have been for their welfare*, (Psal. lxi. 22.) be as a trap to catch and hold them fast, like wild beasts, in the darkness, prejudices, and carnality of their own minds: And, as they perversely stumble at Christ, let their enjoyments, through their abuses of them, be an occasion of their stumbling, like blind and drunken men, that fall to their own perdition. And let all this be the just reward of their disobedience and infidelity, according to their own deserts.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see; and bow down their back alway.

10 As they hate the light, and indulge to their own pride and luxury, which debase the soul; and as they resolutely persist in their rebellion against Christ, and against all the authoritative and endearing methods of providence and grace; let them, according to the natural tendency of such evil courses, be delivered up, in the righteous judgment of God, to their direful effects; even unto the blinding of their minds with respect to things which are most excellent, and which concern their everlasting peace, that they may not see the way of their escape from deserved wrath and ruin. And do thou, O Lord, in just retribution for their resolute contempt of thy Son, and of all thy mercies, keep them under perpetual bondage to the powers of this world *, and to Satan and their own corruptions, like slaves, whose backs are bent with labour, and *whose loins continually shake*, (Psal. lxi. 23.) by carrying heavy burdens under the yoke of the most oppressive tyrants: And since they are so sensual and carnal, as to seek and choose this world for a portion, let them go on to pore upon earthly things, and never have a heart given them to look up towards heaven, and converse with things above.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled

11 But from what has now been said about God's having reserved only a small remnant of the *Jews*, and

X x x 2

N O T E

* Here is an allusion to the state of Israel's Egyptian bondage, in their deliverance from which God said, *He had made them go upright*. (Lev. xxvi. 13.) And as the verb, (*εὐχρηστος*) here u-

sed, is the second person *active*, it intimates, that God had a righteous hand in inflicting this punishment of their iniquity upon them.

bled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

and rejected the rest for their unbelief, which, by this time, is become a *national* sin, as their priests and rulers, and all ranks and orders of people among them have generally gone into it, must we hence conclude that God has suffered them to stumble at Christ to their own perdition, (*chap. ix. 32.*) to the end that the whole body of them, as a nation *, should fall (as *Jer. 13.*) from their ancient privileges, to their utter ruin, and that irrecoverably and for ever? Is this God's design in so awful a dispensation? And shall this be the sad event? No, by no means; (*see verse 31.*) far be it from us to entertain a thought, so injurious to his mercy and his faithfulness: But we must rather conclude, as the event shews in measure already, and as in future times will more fully appear, that God graciously and wisely designed, and accordingly has ordered in his providence, that their offence, (*καταπτώσις*) by falling into the sin of obstinately rejecting Christ, should be over-ruled, and turned into an occasion of the gospel's being the sooner sent to the *Gentiles*, as the means of their salvation: (*Acts xiii. 46, 47.*) And the ready reception it should meet with among that idolatrous people, which are so much

N O T E.

* Here, as I take it, the apostle advances in his argument to the rejection of the *Jews*, and calling of the *Gentiles*, as *nationally* considered, more directly and fully than hitherto: For though he had interspersed some thoughts of this tendency in the preceding discourse, from the 28th verse of the eighth chapter, to the 10th verse of this, to prepare his way gradually to that point, which he knew would be most of all provoking to the *Jews*, and even to some that were christianized among them; yet he there, in my humble apprehension, speaks more apparently and largely of *saving* blessings, as dispensed with a sovereign distinction between God's elect, and others, even among the chosen body of the *Jews*, as well as among the *Gentiles*, who were made partakers of the means of grace for bringing about God's eternal design of mercy towards multitudes of them: And he there illustrates his argument about God's choosing some and rejecting others, by instancing in *single* persons, such as *Jacob*, *Esau*, and *Pharaoh*, and by the *children of the promise*, that are accounted for the seed, which he calls a *remnant*, according to the election of grace, in distinction from the *body of the Israelites*, after the flesh, out of which they were chosen and called. But from

this verse to the 33d, the apostle neither makes any such distinction of some, from others out of the same body of people, nor illustrates his argument with such *personal* examples; but speaks chiefly, though not confinedly, of a *visible* church-state, and of *external* privileges, as means of salvation, which should be transferred from the *Jewish* nation to the *Gentile* world, and be made effectual to vast numbers of them; but which in after ages should be restored, with glorious and extensive efficacy, to the *Jews*, when God should take away their sins; and with still greater enlargement to the *Gentiles*. Accordingly he represents the covenant-church-state of *Israel* under the figure of a *good olive-tree*, from which they, as a nation, had cut themselves off by unbelief, and into which the *Gentiles*, like the branches of a *wild olive-tree*, were grafted by faith, to partake of all its privileges and blessings; and speaks of the whole nation of the *Jews*, as *holy* in a federal sense, and of the gracious regard God would hereafter shew to them, on account of their national election for their *fathers* sakes: So that they, in due time, like cions of the good olive-tree, should be grafted again into their old stock, to partake of its virtue for their spiritual benefit.

much the object of *Jewish* detestation and envy, and were so unlikely to receive it, was designed and ordered to be a further means of trial to the *Jews* themselves, for stirring up a noble emulation among them to equal, and even exceed, the *Gentiles* in faith and obedience, that so despised a people might not be their rivals; and carry away the gospel, and all its privileges and blessings from themselves.

12 And (δε) if the apostacy (το παραπτώμα) of the *Jews*, and their falling off from God's covenant, so as to be no longer his peculiar people, be made a proper occasion, in the counsels and methods of divine wisdom, for the sooner enriching of the *Gentile*-world with the gospel-revelation, which contains the most inestimable blessings, and makes them rich toward God, that by faith receive it: And if the fault of the *Jews* in losing their many privileges *, and the defect of believers, as to the small number of persons of that character among them, be made an occasion of bringing the unsearchable riches of Christ, the more speedily to the poor destitute nations round about them; how much more will the faith of the *Gentiles* be confirmed, and yet greater multitudes of them be converted, to their abundant joy and glory; when the time shall come for the whole body of the *Jews* to be nationally taken into covenant again, and restored to a complete enjoyment of the blessings, which they now reject by unbelief?

13 It is with the greatest pleasure that I speak of this eminent advantage which has arose, and will still further accrue to the *Gentiles*: For I mention it particularly to you, the *Gentile* part of the church at *Rome*, for your comfort and joy; because I am in a peculiar manner appointed, and sent by Christ, to be the chief of his apostles, to minister the gospel to the *Gentiles*, wherever I come, or have opportunity for it: And how much soever some may envy, and others despise me, and be enraged at me for this; I count it an exceeding honourable ministry, that is committed to me, (της διακονίας μου δοξαζω) I glory in it, and glorify God for it, and for the remarkable success, which, by his grace, has already attended my discharge of it, and which will be its blessed consequence yet more abundantly, when the fulness of the *Gentiles* shall come in.

14 I mention these things to your joy; not from any disrespect or ill-will to my countrymen, the *Jews*, nor

NOTE

* The *diminishing* (το ὀλίγον) signifies the *fault* or *defect*, and is rendered *faute*, (Cor. vi. 7.) which is the only place besides this where it is used in the New Testament.

voke to emulation
them which are my
flesh, and might
save some of them.

14 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

world; what shall

the receiving of

them be, but life

from the dead?

15 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

world; what shall

the receiving of

them be, but life

from the dead?

16 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

world; what shall

the receiving of

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from the dead?

17 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

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the receiving of

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from the dead?

18 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

world; what shall

the receiving of

them be, but life

from the dead?

19 For if the

casting away of

them be the re-

conciling of the

world; what shall

the receiving of

them be, but life

from the dead?

nor to encourage your insulting them; but with an affectionate concern also for them, and good desire toward them; and I should heartily rejoice, if it may please God so far to own me, as that now at length by *this*, if not by other means which I have tried, I might stir up some of them, who are my kindred according to the flesh, to a holy desire, and endeavour, by divine grace, to outstrip the *Gentiles* in their reception of Christ and the gospel; and whose nation I am as tenderly and warmly affected to, as though they were members of my own natural body: And it is my great ambition to be a happy instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, for recovering some, at least, of them, by this means, from their impenitence and unbelief; and for bringing them into the way of salvation, in order to their deliverance, through Jesus Christ, from the wrath to come, and their inheriting eternal life.

15 But, to return, I say that the national conversion of the *Jews* hereafter will be an exceeding great advantage to the *Gentiles*: For if God's rejecting the *Jews*, and throwing them out of his visible covenant for their obstinate infidelity, be turned into an occasion of his hastening to send the gospel to the *Gentiles*, for bringing them into a state of favour with him, through faith in his Son; what a wonderful effect will there be of God's receiving the *Jews* again into his covenant, when there shall be a general conversion of them, and he shall restore them to their original church-state and privileges, through their embracing their own Messiah by faith? This will be such a surprising and delightful, unexpected, sudden and glorious event, as will cause abundant joy to the believing *Gentiles*, and will be a means of quickening vast multitudes among them to the life of God, who till then, remained dead in trespasses and sins; yet it will make such a beautiful, lovely, and illustrious change in the face of the whole church, as will be like a resurrection from the dead. And this general conversion of the *Jews* is by no means to be despised of.

16 For if the
first-fruit

16 For as the offering of the first-fruits * sanctified

N O T E.

* By the *first-fruits*, some understand the few *Jewish* converts, which at first entered into the Christian church, and were accepted of God. But, though I have glanced at this, I rather incline, with others, to take the *first-fruits* and the root, to mean the same thing under different allusions; and to signify the *Jewish* patriarchs, and especially *Abra-*

ham, with whom the covenant was first made, from whom the whole nation sprung, and by whom it was consecrated to God, as the offering of the first-fruit sanctified the whole product of the land, the offering of a cake, or two wave-loaves, sanctified the whole lump of dough. (Lev. xxiii. 10.—17. Numb. xv. 19, 20, 21.) And it is ex-

first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

the whole harvest, and the offering of a cake sanctified the whole mass of dough; so if *Abraham* was visibly separated to the Lord, and became federally holy by that *everlasting covenant, which be established with him, to be a God to him, and to his seed after him in their generations*; (Gen. xvii. 7, 19.) then, in the like covenant-sense, the whole body of his descendents are holy, as a church visibly consecrated to the Lord: And as branches partake of the nature of their root; so if *Abraham*, who was the root of administration to the *Jewish* church and nation, as their natural and federal father, were relatively holy by the constitution of that covenant which was made with him and his seed; then his natural posterity, considered as springing from him, and included in that covenant, must be relatively holy too. And therefore there is abundant ground to hope, that, though the generality of the present generation have cut off themselves, and their natural seed, from their covenant-church-state, and all its privileges, by their unbelief; yet, in after-ages, from the love which God bears to them, as a community, and from the national election he has made of them, for their fathers sakes, (ver. 28.) he will be so graciously mindful of his everlasting covenant, as to convert the body of them to the faith of Christ, and thereby bring them and their seed into all the privileges of a church-state again: Some little specimen, pledge, and earnest of which he has already given, in the few of them that are already actually called, as a sort of first-fruits to God.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou,

17 And if some, (see the note on ver. 25.) yea, even the main body of the natural seed of *Abraham**, that sprang from him, as branches from their root,

NOTES.

ent from the then present state of *Israel*, that when the apostle speaks of the whole nation of the *Jews* as *holy*, it cannot be meant of a personal and inherent, but of relative and external holiness, as persons and things that were separated to the Lord, were counted *holy*; and so the whole nation of the *Jews*, inclusive of their seed, were commonly styled an *holy people*, in distinction from the nations that were out of the pale of the covenant. (Deut. xiv. 2, 21. and xxvi. 18, 19. Isa. vi. 13. Dan. viii. 24, and xiii. 7.)

* For understanding this and some following verses, we are to consider, that God's covenant was first made with *Abraham* and his seed, he is meant by the root; and the visible church of *Israel*, as springing from him, and from

that covenant made with him, is meant by the good olive-tree, as it is represented under this figure; (Jer. xi. 16. and Hos. xiv. 6.) and by the *fatness of the olive-tree*, is meant the *blessings and privileges*, which belonged to their church-state, by virtue of that covenant. Accordingly the *natural branches* signify *Abraham's* offspring after the flesh; and the *wild olive-tree*, signifies the *Gentiles*; and the *grafting in of them that were cut out of the wild olive-tree*, signifies God's taking the believing *Gentiles* into his visible covenant; and their *partaking, with some of the natural branches of the root and fulness of the olive-tree*, signifies the believing *Gentiles* being admitted to share equally with the believing *Jews*, in all the blessings and privileges

thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;

And as thou wast cut off from the root and fatness of the olive-tree, so thou shalt be cut off from the church-state, and shalt be incorporated into a wild stock, you were incorporated into a church-state under Abraham's covenant, as his spiritual children, through faith in Christ, (Gal. iii. 29.) together with those of his natural offspring that believe; and so are like the cion of a wild stock*, that is inserted, with its buds, among the natural branches of a good tree: And if, with those believing Jews, you are made partaker of all the promises and ordinances, privileges and blessings of the gracious covenant made with Abraham, as though you yourself had been one of his natural and believing descendants, (Gal. iii. 14. and Eph. iii. 6.) and so are like a graft, which derives sap from the root, and is nourished by the generous juices of a good olive-tree, (ver. 24.) to make it flourishing and fruitful: If, I say, you are thus highly favoured of the Lord;

18 Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

18 Take heed of vaunting against those Jews, who, because of their unbelief, are cast out of God's visible church, like branches that are cut off from their own good tree; do not entertain a high conceit of yourself, as if you were more worthy than they, and might now despise and insult over them, as they formerly dealt by you: But, if you find any evil disposition to haughtiness and insolence, and to a contemptuous slight of them, on this account; remember that, as the branch of a tree does not bear the root, but the root the branch; so you, of the Gentile race, that are but like a branch, and that an engrafted one, among the believing Jews, contributed nothing to Abraham, or his descendants, as God's covenant was made with him and his seed; but you derive all your church-privileges, through them, from him, as the father of many nations, even of all them that believe; (chap. iv. 11, 17, 18.) and by carrying it scornfully to them, who, like natural branches sprung from

root, are cut off from their covenant-claim for their unbelief; and if any of you, who are Gentiles, and as such were in your natural condition strangers to the covenants of promise, (Eph. ii. 12.) and, like branches of a wild olive tree, were useless and unprofitable, worthy to be rejected, and fit for burning; if, nevertheless, by the wonderful-kindness of God, contrary to all reasonable expectation, and to the custom of men, who use to graft the branch of a fruitful tree into a wild stock, you were incorporated into a church-state under Abraham's covenant, as his spiritual children, through faith in Christ, (Gal. iii. 29.) together with those of his natural offspring that believe; and so are like the cion of a wild stock*, that is inserted, with its buds, among the natural branches of a good tree: And if, with those believing Jews, you are made partaker of all the promises and ordinances, privileges and blessings of the gracious covenant made with Abraham, as though you yourself had been one of his natural and believing descendants, (Gal. iii. 14. and Eph. iii. 6.) and so are like a graft, which derives sap from the root, and is nourished by the generous juices of a good olive-tree, (ver. 24.) to make it flourishing and fruitful: If, I say, you are thus highly favoured of the Lord;

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NOTES.

privileges of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, and of the church-state, into which God had brought them.

* Grafting a branch, which is always with its buds, strongly intimates, as here applied to believing Gentiles, that they

are brought into Abraham's covenant with their children, to partake of the same privileges to which the children of believing Jews were entitled, and from which those of unbelievers among them were cut off, together with their parents.

from him; you, in a manner, insult over *Abraham* himself, who, like a root, originally bore them, and now bears you.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in,

19 But perhaps, one or another of you, *Gentile* converts, may object against what has been offered to check your vain boasting against the *Jews*, that they were cut off from their church-state and privileges by the wise ordination and disposal of God, in order to the making of room for me, and other *Gentile* believers, to be inserted in their places, as a cion is grafted on a tree, to supply the place of dead, withering, or fruitless branches, that have been justly and prudently taken away from it: And therefore I may have some reason to think better of myself than of them; and to look upon them with disdain, as the most abandoned wretches.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.

20 Well, admitting this to be one great design of God in this dispensation; yet it is to be considered, that it was because they rejected Christ, and the way of salvation by him, through their obstinate unbelief, that God cast them out of his visible church and covenant, and removed his gospel from them to you: And you should ever remember, that it is only by faith, which you credibly profess to have, in Jesus Christ, as your only Saviour, that you have been brought into their privileges, and have hitherto stood (*verra*) in possession of them. Let these considerations therefore be a caution to you, that you may not give way to a conceit of your own worthiness, and a contempt of others, or to self-confidence of your own ability to persevere in your holy profession; but that you labour, in the strength of divine grace, and in the use of all appointed means, to maintain an awful reverence of God, with an humble modest diffidence of yourself, and godly jealousy over your own heart, and a holy fear of sinning and falling, after their example, by unbelief, which you are naturally as prone to as they, and of thereby offending and provoking him to cast you off likewise.

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

21 For if God, in his righteous judgment, did not think fit to bear so far with the natural seed of *Abraham*, as not to cast them off for their unbelief, though they were his ancient covenant people, you have just reason to fear, lest, if you indulge to pride and unbelief, he should proceed to the like extremity against you, for abusing his grace, whereby he has, so contrary to all your deserts, taken you, who were not of his people, into their privileges.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and

22 Observe therefore, and seriously reflect upon, the wonderful benignity (*xenotomia*) of God, in free vouchsafements of mercy and goodness on one hand;

and severity of God: on them which fell, severity: but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree?

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree?

And upon the strictness of his justice, (*ἀποστασία*) in cutting off, on the other, that are displayed in this dispensation; I mean the exact and unyielding justice, which he has shewn in taking away the gospel from the *Jewish* nation, that fell from their covenant-privileges by unbelief; but the remarkable and undeserved kindness which he has extended toward you, who lay among the outcast *Gentiles*, in sending his gospel to you, and opening your heart to receive it, as you profess to do; and so taking you into his church, and admitting you to all its glorious privileges and blessings, which will be blessings indeed, in case you, by an humble faith, shall continue within the sphere of his goodness: But if, through pride and unbelief, you abuse this merciful dispensation, God will also unchurch you, together with all such nominally Christian *Gentiles*, as he has the *Jews*; and you, as well as they, shall be cut off from his visible covenant, and from all the blessings pertaining to it.

23 And, to return to what has been already suggested, (*ver. 11,—16.*) If the *Jewish* nation do not still continue resolutely to reject their only Messiah, by persisting in unbelief, even *they* shall be taken into God's church and covenant again. And it is far from being *unsupposable*, that they should be recovered from their incredulity, and so restored to their ancient privileges: For how desperate soever their present condition may seem to be, like branches cut off, and withered, and quite dead; yet the great God, with whom all things are possible, can as easily convert them, and so graft them again, through faith in Christ, into the covenant of *Abraham* their father, from which they had cut themselves off by unbelief, as he has the believing *Gentiles*, who formerly were *without Christ*, being *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenants of promise*, having no hope, and without God in the world. (*Eph. ii. 12.*)

24 Nor is it at all *inconceivable* or *improbable*, that God, in his due time, should deal thus graciously with his ancient people, the *Jews*: For if you, who was a *Gentile* by birth, were taken out from among the idolatrous nations, that never had been included in *Abraham's* covenant before, and were, by nature, as worthless, despicable, and useless as the branches of a wild olive tree; and if you, by supernatural grace, were brought into the covenant of promises, to partake of all the privileges of the church of God, which is like grafting the cion of a wild olive, directly contrary to its own nature, into a good olive tree,

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to mend and entirely change its qualities, and make it fruitful; how much more reasonable is it to suppose, that the nation of the *Jews*, who are the natural seed of *Abraham*, shall, through faith in the Lord Jesus, be brought back into the covenant and church of God again, from which they had cut themselves off by their infidelity, that they may partake of all its virtue for their spiritual benefit? This will be but like cutting off the branches of a good olive-tree, and grafting them again into their own natural stock, which is originally suited to convey the most agreeable nourishment to them. And this is not only probable, but will *certainly* be the happy state of that people toward the end of the world.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

25 For I would unfold to you, my Christian brethren, and particularly to those of you, that are of the *Gentile* part of the church, the grand secret, with regard to this point, which lay hid in the counsels of God from eternity, and has been but obscurely hinted in *prophecy*; and which, notwithstanding the clear revelation, that Christ has now made of it to the apostles by the Spirit, may still seem to you, according to present appearances, to be so very strange, as to exceed all reasonable expectation: Though ye may be at a loss how to account for it, I would fain have you know, and believe the truth and certainty of the thing itself; lest, while ye indulge to your own carnal reasonings, and remain ignorant of the mind and will of God herein, ye should be puffed up with pride, as if ye were competent judges of his designs, and should contemn the *Jews* from a conceited opinion of yourselves, as if ye were more worthy than they; and as if the favour of God were henceforth to be confined to you, and the whole body of them were to be utterly, and for ever, excluded from it. The grand secret, which I now mean, is, that blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, have befallen, not indeed every one of them, there being a remnant, even at this present time, according to the election of grace, that have obtained righteousness to eternal life; (ver. 5, 7.) but that this awful judgment is justly come upon the * far greatest part of the *Jewish* na-

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NOTES

* As the apostle, to soften his representation of a subject that would be so very offensive to the *Yews*, expressed their total rejection by some of the *branches being broken off*, (ver. 17.) so, for like reason, he here speaks of *blindness or hardness (αἰσχυρία)* happening to men in part, (*αὐτὸ μέρος*) though he does not say of the *generality* of them. This phrase (*αὐτὸ μέρος*) translated in part, is no where used, that I can find, in all the New Testament, but in this apostle's writings, who has it five times, *viz.* here, and *chap. xv. 15. 24.* and *2 Cor. i. 14.* and *ii. 5.* In all which places except *Rom. xv. 24.* and perhaps in that too, it seems plainly to signify in part, as to *number* for distinguishing one sort

tion for their wilful infidelity; and that this will continue upon them, as a body, not indeed always, but for many generations, till there shall be, in God's own time, a more general conversion of the *Gentile* nations to the faith of Christ *, and a much greater number of them shall be brought into the church than yet has ever been,

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

26 And then, after the same manner, (*vra*) or by a like general conversion, vast multitudes of *Israelites* after the flesh, shall be brought into a state of salvation †; and that people, as a body, shall be taken into the visible church. Some hints of which were given in ancient prophecy, as it is written in *I/a. lii. 20.* which will have its complete accomplishment toward the end of the world, and is of the following purport †, The Messiah, who is the great and only Redeemer from sin and wrath, and was typified by the famous deliverers from temporal destruction under the Old Testament, shall spring out of the church of *Israel*, as deriving his human nature from them, and shall appear in the days of his flesh at *Jerusalem*, and send forth his word from thence; (*I/a. ii. 3.*) and

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of persons from another, and not as to measure or degree; though a similar phrase, (*ex μέρει*) which is likewise rendered in *part*, is most commonly used to signify in some measure, by way of distinction from completely, as in *1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12.*

* The fulness of the Gentiles here, and the fulness of the Jews, (*ver. 12.*) are to be taken in much the same sense as to each of them respectively; and therefore as the fulness of the Jews signifies their national conversion; so the fulness of the Gentiles coming in, seems to import a general conversion of the Gentiles through all nations of the world.

† All *Israel*, in this place, does not mean all God's spiritual *Israel*, inclusive of Jewish and Gentile believers, as in *Gal. vi. 16.* where the apostle prays for peace and mercy upon the *Israel of God*. But it is to be here restrained to the natural seed of *Abraham*, whom the apostle had called *Israel*, and his own flesh: (*ver. 7, 14.*) For it is opposed to the fulness of the Gentiles, mentioned at the close of the preceding verse; and all *Israel*, that shall be saved, answers to the fulness of the Gentiles that shall come in, with an intimation that one, for its universality, shall be in like manner with the other. But as it cannot be well supposed that, in all latter ages,

every individual of the Gentiles, no more can it, that every individual of the Jews, shall be eternally saved; therefore all *Israel's* being saved, may either signify great multitudes, as the fulness of the Gentiles doth; or may relate to their being nationally brought into the gospel-church, in which salvation warrantably be hoped for, through Jesus Christ, answerable to what has been done among the Gentiles.

† As *Sion* is sometimes taken literally for *Jerusalem*, or the mount thereof which was called *Sion*; at others for the church of *Israel*; and at others for the New Testament-church; and as the prophet speaks of the Redeemer's coming to *Sion*, and to them that turn from transgression in *Jacob*, which the apostle, mostly, according to the Seventy, renders, The deliverer shall come out of *Sion*, and shall turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*; I have taken these senses into the paraphrase. Whether the last clause of the next verse, When I shall take away their sin, be a quotation, according to the Seventy from *I/a. xxvii. 9.* or from any part of the Old Testament, as I think; or whether it only refers to what is here said about turning away ungodliness from *Jacob*, as others think, is doubtful to me, that I have left it undetermined.

he shall come out of the New Testament-church, which he will erect, and which will be the seat of his spiritual residence upon earth, to bless the seed of *Yacob*, who are the children of the covenant, which was made with their fathers; (*Act* iii. 25, 26.) and by the merit of his blood, and the efficacy of his grace, he shall take away the guilt, the power, and defilement, and the punishment of all their trespasses, and particularly of their having so long obstinately rejected him; and shall make such a wonderful change upon their hearts by his word and Spirit, that they, under his influence, shall turn from their iniquities to God through him.

27 And (*καὶ*) still further to raise their faith and hope, that this promise shall certainly be performed, God by the same prophet says, in the very next words, (*Isa*. lix. 21.) This is the covenant, which I have made with the nation and church of *Israel**, to assure them that I will have a gracious regard to their posterity in the most distant generations, and which (how long soever I may seem utterly to abandon them) I will fulfil in a most remarkable manner to them in future ages, when, in the riches of my free and sovereign grace, on the great Redeemer's account, (*ver*. 26.) I shall pardon all their sins, and turn them, by my promised Spirit, from them, and particularly from their unbelief, whereby they have highly provoked me, and given me just cause to cast them off for ever. All this shews that there must be a time for God's restoring this people, and bringing them into his church again: The true state then of their case is this.

28 With respect to the gospel of Christ, and the way of salvation alone through him, they are indeed, at present, enemies to it, yea, have contradicted and blasphemed it, and so cut themselves off from its privileges and blessings, as being filled with envy at its being preached to, and received by you *Gentiles*; (*Acts* xiii. 45.) and God in his righteous judgment to them, and abundant mercy to you, has over-ruled it

N O T E.

* The words in *Isaiah*, that follow, *This is my covenant with them, are, my Spirit, that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* And as this was so strong a promise of the covenant, there mentioned, that God would never utterly and finally cast off the natural seed of *Yacob*, and was so much to

the apostle's purpose, it seems to me, that his only mentioning this covenant, was supposed sufficient to lead our thoughts to his design, in referring to it; since, though he did not recite the promise contained therein, that might easily be supplied, by turning to the well-known place itself; and the text does not come up so clearly and fully to his point, unless we take in the whole of it.

it to your advantage, that the gospel might the sooner come, and have the wider spread, among you, (*Acts* xiii. 46, 47.) and that ye might be taken into his visible church and covenant in their stead; and for all this is for your sakes: (*ver.* 11, 12, 15.) But with respect to that free choice *, which God of his mere good pleasure made of them, as a nation, to be his peculiar people, they are still the objects of his kind and merciful regards, on account of the special favour he had for their fathers after the flesh, even for *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and on account of the choice, which in his love he first made of them and their posterity, to be a peculiar people to himself, above all others nations.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

29 For the blessings which God, according to either a *national* or *personal* election, absolutely grants in the promises of an *everlasting covenant*, like that, which he made with *Abraham*, to be a *God to him, and his seed after him in their generations*; (*Gen.* xvii. 7.) and the calling, which depends on his own mere favour, in accomplishment of his free choice and promises, are such as he neither doth, nor ever will revoke; since *the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent*: For he is not a man, that he should repent of his free purposes and promises, (*1 Sam.* xv. 29.) as men often do of theirs, through their own instability, or because they imprudently made, or are not able to perform them. And therefore we may depend on the infinite wisdom, power, goodness and unchangeableness of God, that, in his time and way, this chosen nation shall be called again, and many of them in such an effectual manner, as shall be to their everlasting salvation. (*Isa.* xlv. 17.)

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief!

30 For as ye, *Gentiles*, who for many ages past were *strangers to the covenant of promises*, and were not only *without Christ*, and *having no hope of eternal life*; but lived, like very atheists, (*αδύοι*) *without God in the world*; (*Eph.* ii. 12.) as ye, I say, notwithstanding

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* The apostle had before spoke of a particular election of some persons, from among the *Jews*, unto eternal life, calling them a *remnant according to the election of grace*, and the election that obtained, in distinction from others of them that were blinded. (*ver.* 5, 7.) But here, as I take it, he speaks principally at least, of a *national* election of their body, to be God's peculiar people, in distinction from the *Gentiles*: For in this foregoing context, he had been discoursing about the *Jews*, as *nationally* considered; and he here says, that ac-

cording to God's election of them, as such, they were beloved for their fathers sakes. (*δια τῶν πατέρων*) And so it answers to what *Moses* said, (*Deut.* ix. 37. and vii. 6, 7, 8. and x. 15.) about the *Lord's choosing them, and making them a special people to himself, above all people*; because he loved their fathers, and chose their seed after them; and yet it can hardly be supposed, that God should choose a whole nation to be his people visibly in covenant with him, and not have some among them, whom he chose to faith, holiness, and salvation.

withstanding all your former hateful, helpless, and hopeless circumstances of infidelity and all iniquity, have now obtained free and sovereign mercy, in God's bringing you into his visible covenant, and making those of you partakers of its saving benefits, that have *believed with the heart unto righteousness*; (chap. x. 10.) and as this wonderful grace is come to you, by means of the gospel, which, because of the unbelief of the *Jews*, was preached without further delay, and with great success to you: (*Acts* xiii. 46.)

31 Even so, in like manner, the generality of the *Jews* themselves have been suffered, for a time, to reject Christ and the declarations of God's grace concerning him, as being offended at your embracing him; that by means of the mercy, which ye, *Gentiles*, are therein partakers of, God might over-rule it in his providence, for provoking the *Jews* to a noble emulation; (*ver.* 11.) and for preserving the gospel in the world, as the means, by which they at length shall have an opportunity of hearing it preached to them again, unto their obtaining mercy, through faith in their own Messiah, that they, as a nation, may be restored to their ancient privileges; and that those of them, which shall sincerely believe, may be eternally saved. And as this is every way *as likely*, to say the least, as the calling of the idolatrous *Gentiles* once was; so it may be as *surely* depended upon.

32 For God (*κυριεύων*) has shut up all nations, in their turns, by his providential dispensations, first the *Gentiles*, and afterwards the *Jews*; he has so shut them up under the power of their own disobedience and unbelief, as to shut them out of his visible church and kingdom, to the end that (*192*) in his due time, he might magnify the exceeding riches of his free and sovereign grace the more illustriously, in calling, not indeed every individual person internally, but the general bodies, first of the *Jews*, and then of the *Gentiles* externally, (see the first note on *ver.* 26.) and at length of both together, without any distinction of nations, by bringing them all into one fold under Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. (*John* x. 16.)

33 *Lo, these are part of God's ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!* (*Job* xxvi. 14.) To search further into these divine counsels and dispensations, would be to wade beyond my depth; *such knowledge is too wonderful for me*; (*Psal.* cxxxix. 6.) I adore and acquiesce in what I cannot comprehend; and instead of curiously prying into it, or cavilling

villing at it, would cry out with solemn reverence * O the awful and delightful, the amazing, bottomless, and boundless abyss of the riches of God's goodness and grace, in choosing and calling both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under circumstances, in which it was most unlikely that either of them should be regarded with any favour! And O the astonishing, unfathomable depth of his manifold, excellent, and abundant wisdom, and infinite understanding, who has an all-comprehending view of the whole compass of things at once; and who orders, disposes, and over-rules all events, for bringing about his glorious ends, in a manner worthy of himself, though unaccountable to us, as he has done in making the rejection of the *Jews* subservient to the calling of the *Gentiles*! How impenetrable are the reasons of the determinations of his infinite mind concerning particular persons and nations, in a way of judgment, as well as of mercy! and how untraceable (*ἀνεξετάστοι*) are the methods of his providence, for accomplishing his great designs, who is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working* (IIa. xxviii. 29.) *whose way is in the sea; whose path is in great waters, and whose footsteps are not known!* (Psal. lxxvii. 19.)

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

34 For (*τίς*) what mere creature has any insight into the secret thoughts of the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and into the noble schemes and views of his infinite mind, which he is pursuing, by the most improbable means, in the unsearchable methods of his appointments, and providential dealings with *Jews* and *Gentiles*? Who can find out, or account for these, any further than the *only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed them?* (John i. 18.) Or (*τίς*) what man or angel has joined in counsel with God, to assist in forming the model of his designs, or directing his way, and prescribing how he should act, for accomplishing the

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* O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, (*ὁ βάθος τοῦ πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ*) may as well be rendered, O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and knowledge of God; and so *riches* may signify, not only the exceeding abundance and excellency of God's wisdom and knowledge; but likewise what the apostle calls the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and grace, in which he has abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence. (Chap. ii. 4. and Eph. i. 7, 8.) This sense of the word *riches*, well agrees with the preceding

discourse; where, among other things, the apostle had been speaking, at length of God's sovereign mercy toward *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and toward some of them, rather than others. (Chap. ix. 24. and xi. 5, 6, 30, 31, 32.) And in the progress of this admiring exhortation, he takes notice of the adorable, merited freeness, with which God bestows the forementioned blessings, saying, *Who has first given to him?* (ver. 35, 36.) and these he styles the mercies of God, in his practical inference from the whole. (Chap. xii. 1.)

and eternal contrivances and resolutions of his wisdom and will? (*Isa. xl. 13, 14.*)

35 Or who hath
first given to him,
and it shall be re-
compensed unto
him again?

35 Or if any insolent *Jews* should dare to complain of the divine dispensations, as though God dealt too severely with some persons, and particularly with their own nation, in rejecting them, whilst, at the same time, he displays the riches of his mercy to others, in choosing and calling them, especially the *Gentiles*, let me ask such bold cavillers, Who has ever been beforehand with the great Lord of the universe, to lay any obligation, or make a demand upon him, that deserves a retribution of good at his hand? If any one is to be found, that can offer the least pretence of this kind, let him stand forth, and enter his claim; God will certainly repay him, and he shall never have any room to find fault, as if the Judge of all the earth did not do right, or were not just to him. But it is absolutely impossible, that any creature whatsoever, and it is a shocking thought to suppose, that any of the *sinful* sons of men, should have such a claim of debt upon the great and holy God.

36 For of him,
and through him,
and to him, are all
things: to whom
be glory for ever.
Amen.

36 For all things relating to the forementioned dispensations of righteousness and grace, and indeed all things universally of the upper and lower worlds, are of him, as the first former of the whole scheme, and as the Creator and efficient cause, fountain, and source of all good; they are likewise all through, or by him, as their preserving and directing, governing and disposing cause; and they are all to him, as their final cause, or highest end, that his perfections and dominion may one way or other be exalted, and may at length be seen to shine forth with unblemished and harmonious beauty, especially in what relates to salvation by a Redeemer: And so all that has been said, concerning these things, must be ultimately and supremely resolved into the infinitely wise and powerful, holy and gracious sovereignty of God, who is, and cannot but be, *the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*; (*Rev. xxi. 6.*) whom all his works must, and shall, actively, or passively praise; and to whom, as is most fit, all his saints and angels do, and will, cheerfully and unitedly ascribe all possible blessing, honour, and glory, both now and to all eternity, *Amen*, say all that fear and love him; thus it ought to be; thus may it be! and thus it shall be, world without end.

RECollections.

How melancholy is the thought, that so many of the visible church will, like the unbelieving *Jews*, be rejected of God at last! But blessed be his name, that he has always a peculiarly chosen people, whom he foreknew in his eternal de-

signs of love, that never shall be cast off: He has reserved them for himself; and though these, comparatively speaking, are but a small remnant; yet absolutely, and in themselves, they are a great number, even many thousands more than may be commonly apprehended in the worst of times. The salvation of all these is from first to last, entirely of grace: This is the spring of God's choosing them to it, and from hence it is that they obtain it, without the least consideration of their own works as meritorious, or moving causes of it, which would be to destroy the very nature of free grace; and God will never revoke his absolute grants of covenant-privileges to a nationally chosen people, or of saving covenant-blessings to his more peculiar elect among them, though others, being left to themselves, are hardened, entangled, ensnared, and caught by their own corruptions, to their endless perdition.—Alas! How wild and unprofitable are we all by nature, like the poor *Gentiles*, while they remained in unbelief! If we are become better, it is because we have now obtained mercy of the Lord, according to the gracious covenant which he made first with *Abraham* and his natural seed, and then with *Gentile* believers, who, instead of those that were cut off by unbelief, are partakers of the same privileges and blessings for themselves and their offspring, as the church of *Israel* were of old, and together with those of them that abode in God's covenant. But has the body of that people stumbled and fallen; and has God wonderfully over-ruled it, for bringing salvation to us *Gentiles*, and for erecting a church to himself amongst us, that we may partake of the covenant-root and inheritance which they have lost? How humble and thankful, watchful, depending, and careful should we be, under all our church privileges! How cautiously afraid of provoking God, lest he should no more spare us than he did his ancient people. And how should we be awed by considerations of our own weakness and unworthiness of the riches of God's goodness to us, and of the strictness of his justice towards obstinate unbelievers, to take heed of pride and boasting, and of despising and insulting, instead of pitying them, as also of giving way to unbelief, since our standing is by faith! There is indeed a ground of hope in Christ for the chief of sinners, and even for apostates, in their returning by faith to God through him; he having fixed up both those sorts of persons under the power of their own unbelief, for the brighter display of the glory of his free mercy in calling and saving them: But finally abiding in impenitence and unbelief, will certainly issue in eternal destruction. How deplorable is the present state of the *Jews*? And what a happiness has God brought to the *Gentile* world by the gospel! But O! what a glorious day of numerous converts to Christ will there be, in the winding up of God's dispensations towards the church, when the fulness of the *Gentiles* shall be brought in, and all *Israel* shall be saved! As we have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, it should be our earnest prayer and concern, that they may be excited to a holy emulation by means of our faith; and it may well be our hope and joy, that as they are still nationally beloved, for their covenant-fathers sakes, God, in due time, will remember them, according to his promise. How modest and humble should we be, in all our thoughts about the unsearchable decrees of God, and the dispensations of his providence and grace, without curiously prying into his secrets, or pretending to arraign them, or prescribe to him! With what reverent awe should we adore, and acquiesce in what surpasses our comprehension, saying, *O the depths!* And, after all our thoughts about the ways of his mercy and judgment, we must ultimately resolve them into his infinite wisdom and sovereign will, that the glory of all may be absolutely referred to him, who is debtor to none, and will stand clear in judgment, with regard to all his works, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

C H A P. XII.

The apostle proceeds to a practical improvement of the foregoing doctrine, in exhortations of believers to a holy dedication of themselves to God, 1, 2. To an humble opinion of themselves, and a modest behaviour towards others, 3,—5. To a faithful use of the spiritual gifts which God had bestowed upon some of them, in their respective stations, 6,—8. And to various duties, that were incumbent upon private Christians among them, such as love and kindness, zeal, hope, patience, and prayer, 9,—12. Hospitality and meekness, sympathy and condescension, 13,—16. And an honourable and peaceable conduct towards all men, together with forbearance and benevolence towards injurious enemies, 17,—21.

TEXT.

BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

PARAPHRASE.

HAVING thus represented at large, the exceeding riches of God's mercy and grace to sinners, both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, in their free justification through faith in Christ and his righteousness; and in the glorious blessings and privileges, to which they are called, according to the sovereign and eternal purpose of God, let me now affectionately and earnestly entreat you, my beloved brethren, on these principles, by all the endearments and encouragements, obligations and assistances, that result from these abundant and multiplied favours, and by all your profession and hope of a personal interest in them; let me, I say, rather beseech you in love, as a brother, than command you with authority, as a father, to devote and give up your whole selves to the Lord, entirely and without reserve: Instead therefore of offering legal sacrifices, which, since the death of Christ, are no longer obligatory, I would call you to nobler oblations*; that as those offerings were to be made of the bodies of living animals, which the offerers had absolutely consigned over to God, according to the law; (*Lev. v. 6, 7.*) so I entreat that ye, as spiritual priests, would present, not birds, or beasts, no, nor

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* Here is a beautiful and instructive allusion to the legal oblation of the bodies of beasts, or birds, in representing the spiritual sacrifices, that Christians are called to offer in the solemn surrender of their own selves to the Lord. The bodies of creatures, that died of themselves, were not to be eaten by the *Israelites*, (*Deut. xiv. 21.*) much less were they to be offered in sacrifice; but such only as were living, which the offerers presented to the Lord, and brought to the priest

to put them to death: (*Lev. xvii. 5.* and *2 Chron. xxix. 21, 22.*) And therefore the apostle speaks of believers, as presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, though their souls were, doubtless, to be included in the offering; for bodily exercise alone profits little; (*1 Tim. iv. 8.*) and in further explaining the nature of this living sacrifice, the apostle immediately mentions their being transformed by the renewing of their mind. (*ver. 2.*)

only your own souls, but together with them, your bodies likewise, for the discharge of all religious and moral duties; not as a propitiatory sacrifice, which would be practically to deny the perfection of Christ's atonement; but as a living sacrifice of acknowledgment, that ye are the Lord's; and as persons, that are quickened by his Spirit, and vigorously determined all your lives long, even unto death, to yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness to God, (chap. vi. 13.) and to glorify him with your bodies and spirits, which are his: (1 Cor. vi. 20.) And as the legal sacrifices were dedicated to the Lord, and were to be without spot and blemish; (Numb. xix. 2.) so it concerns you to present yourselves, as a dedicate thing to him, and as purified from those lusts and corruptions, that take their rise from the body, and principally operate in, and by it: And as those offerings were a sweet savour to God, when presented according to his appointment; so ye should devote yourselves in such a spiritual manner, by faith and evangelical obedience to him, as shall be productive of fruit unto holiness; (chap. vi. 22.) ye, as shall fill you with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God; and so are sacrifices acceptable to him. (Phil. i. 11. and 1 Pet. ii. 5.) All this, especially considering what great things God, in the riches of his sovereign favour and goodness, has done for you, is a homage, which in reason and justice ye owe to him, and ought to perform according to his word; (*τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν*) a service to be performed, not like the offering up of brute beasts, but with all the powers of your rational souls, under a lively apprehension of its being fit and right, that as all is of him, it should likewise be to him. (Chap. xi. 36.)

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

2 And, in order hereunto, (*μὴ σὺν σχηματίζεσθαι*) take heed of forming your schemes for happiness, as though it lay in the things of this world, which are transitory, like a scene that soon passes away; and of symbolizing, or complying with, and being moulded into, the spirit and temper, evil courses and fashions, conversation and manners of carnal and worldly men: Do not imitate and fall in with their depraved customs, who walk in the lusts of the flesh, and mind earthly things; but let it be the earnest governing desire, and pursuit of your souls, in prayer to God, and in the use of all means of his appointment, and in the improvement of your Christian graces and privileges, that ye may be metamorphosed, (*μεταμορφωθῆναι*) or changed into a directly contrary, better, and more glorious

glorious and abiding form, in the renovation of your hearts, yet more and more by the Holy Spirit * : Let this be your principal aim, that ye may discern the distinguishing light; may judge with approbation, and experimentally know in yourselves; (*us to dexmalus*) and may be capable of proving, and recommending to others, the truth, excellence, and importance, of that will of God, which he has revealed in his word, with regard to what is good in itself, and for us; with regard to what is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; and with regard to what is sufficient to make a finished Christian, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*, (2 Tim. iii. 17.) without any addition of ceremonial rites, human traditions, or heathen documents of morality to complete it †.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

3 The best way to understand this perfect will of God, with advantage to yourselves and others, is by an humble use and improvement of those spiritual attainments, which any of you are partakers of: For, to speak with the apostolic authority, which I have received by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (*chap. i. 5.*) I now, not only beseech you in love as a brother; (*ver. 1.*) but also in my great Lord and Master's name, admonish, and charge every one of you, who is favoured with any excellent qualifications, that, whatsoever such an one's station or office may be in the church, he be not puffed up in his own conceit, to the contempt of others; nor entertain a higher opinion of his knowledge and gifts, graces and usefulness, than becomes him, or than God allows him, or than the nature of his spiritual and holy endowments admits of; and that he never pretend to be wise above what he ought to be, by intruding into things too high for him, and beyond what is written; but that he be humble and modest in his own thoughts of himself, and behaviour towards his brethren, as remembering that, whatever he is and has, better than others, it is no more than he has received; (1 Cor. iv. 7.) and that what has been communicated to him was, not according to his own deserts, but merely according to the measure, proportion, or degree of faith, and of all the spiritual gifts and graces, that attend it, and flow from it, which God, in his infinite wisdom

NOTES.

* This may be called the *renewing in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*. (Col. iii. 10. and Eph. iv. 24.)

† The apostle here seems to represent the perfection of the gospel-revelation with respect to moral duties, as well as to the grounds of their acceptance with God, in opposition to *Judaism* on one hand, and *Gentilism* on the other.

wisdom and sovereign grace, has been pleased to bestow on every one, who has it, both for the good of his own soul, and the edification of others. And great reason there is, why he should not be lifted up with pride, and despise others, on account of what *he has received*; (1 Cor. iv. 7.) especially considering the end and use, for which it was given him.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

4 For, as in the frame of one and the same human body, we have many members, that are formed, and properly placed, for different uses, and mutual help, and for the good of the whole, which is constituted by an apt and beautiful union of them all together into one body; and (δι) as all these members of the natural body neither do, nor are fitted, or designed, to perform one and the same function, or operation; (πρᾶτον) some being to serve one sort of purpose, and others another, as the eyes to see, the hands to work, the feet to walk, and the like; which are all very useful and necessary in their places, for the advantage of the whole body;

5 So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

5 So, to apply this to the present purpose, We believers, who are united by faith to Christ, and animated by his Spirit, how many soever there be of us, how various soever our gifts may be, and how many uses and offices soever we may be appointed to in the church; none of us, apart, and by himself, but all together, in conjunction, make up one spiritual body, which is cemented or knit together, by one spirit, in Christ, and under him, as our head of influence and of government, for all the sacred ends, for which he has stationed us in his church: And we all, by virtue of our union with him, are nearly related to each other, as fellow-members of his spiritual body, to serve such uses as may be best suited to the benefit of the whole church, in our respective places *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*. (Eph. iv. 7.) And therefore there is no room for any of us to exalt himself above, and despise another, as though he were a needless member: But every one should be desirous of filling up the proportion of service, that he ought to bear in the body, the church, for the good of the whole.

6 Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith:

6 Having then spiritual gifts of various kinds, not without measure, as Christ, the head, had them all in their utmost fulness; (John iii. 34.) but some having one sort, and others another, and *that* in different degrees, though all tending to the same end, viz. the glory of God, and the edification of the church; and having these excellent gifts as the fruit of God's free favour, and in such kinds and proportions, as he, in his good pleasure, has communicated

them to us, let us, by his assistance, faithfully use and improve them for the best purposes, for which he has bestowed them upon us severally, according to our respective *offices* and *stations* in the church *: If he has appointed and called us to the office of preaching the gospel, by opening and applying the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in his name, and as of the ability which he gives us; let us faithfully discharge this important trust, according to the measure of our light and faith in the mysteries of his will; and let us take special heed, that it be according to the analogy, (*κατα την αναλογίαν*) or agreeable to the rule of faith, and the plainest principles of it, as laid down in the word of God, that all may be consonant to the general scope and tenor of the holy scriptures, and there may be no jarring or discord between *that* and our preaching; but one may cast an harmonious light upon the other.

Or ministry,
let us wait on our
ministering;

Or, if any of us be called to the office of deacons †, for collecting, taking care of, and distributing

NOTES.

* The generality of expositors understand the *gifts* here mentioned, as signifying only those of an *extraordinary* nature, with which persons were then endowed for discharging the several offices here spoken of. But I rather think, with some others, that the apostle means, not merely miraculous and extraordinary, but also such *ordinary* spiritual gifts, as are needful in all ages for the edification and advantage of the church: for the offices, in the discharge of which these gifts were to be exercised, have nothing so peculiar in them, but what might be fulfilled without the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; unless any should suppose that *prophecy* were of that sort. But I apprehend no necessity for such a supposition; since all the other following expressions seem to point out ordinary offices, such as *ministering*, *teaching*, *exhorting*, &c.; and since *prophecy* may be sometimes used to signify, not only interpreting the scripture by immediate inspiration, or foretelling events by a supernatural gift, but any preaching of the word by the *ordinary*, as well as extraordinary assistances of the spirit, 1 Cor. xiv. 1.—5. (see the second note there) in which sense it is said of Christ's faithful ministers, who are called his *two witnesses*, and *two prophets*, that, under Antichrist's reign, they should *prophecy*, or bear witness to Christ in their preaching, twelve hundred and sixty days, which are stiled *the days of*

their prophecy. (Rev. xi. 3, 6, 10.) And as preaching may be called *prophecy*, because its great business is, to explain the prophets and apostles, and to declare what our future and eternal state shall be, according to the word of God; so the church at *Rome* were very sparingly, if at all, furnished with *extraordinary* gifts, as appears from chap. i. 11.

† As all the standing offices of the church are comprehended in those of *bishops* or *pastors* for its *spiritual*, and of *deacons* for its *temporal* concerns, according to the account we have of these in the church at *Philippi*; (chap. i. 1.) so the apostle seems to intend these two general offices by *prophecy* and *ministry*; the last of which (*διακονία*) is the word that gives name to the office of those, who had the care of the poor, and served tables. (Acts vi. 1.—3.) But as in large churches, when occasions required it, some parts of the work belonging to these offices, respectively, were distributed into several hands, to assist or join in them; so I am inclined to think, that, in the latter part of this verse, and in ver. 8. the apostle speaks of *him that teaches*, and *him that exorts*, with a reference to *prophecy*, as bearing a part in that work, either under the character of a co-pastor, or of an assistant; and that he speaks of *him that gives, rules, and shows mercy*, with a reference to the *deacon's* office, as bearing his part in the execution of *that*: For I take all these

ministring; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

ing the church stock, and therein ministring to the poor saints, and to the support of the servants, and ordinances of Christ, let us, with all prudence and faithfulness, frugal liberality and diligence, attend to the work of serving the poor's, the ministers, and the Lord's table, as those that would use the office of a deacon well, to the honour of Christ, and the advantage of the church. (1 Tim. iii. 13.) As to the first of these offices *, (ver. 6.) If any one is called to that branch of the ministerial work, as a teacher, which principally consists in opening the scriptures, and in stating and explaining, illustrating, proving, and defending the truths of the gospel in a doctrinal way; and so instructing and establishing his hearers in the principles of religion, let him closely study the word of God, with an humble dependence on his Spirit for light and guidance, by *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*; (1 Cor. ii. 13.) scriptures with scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament; types, promises, and prophecies, with their accomplishments; and obscurer with plainer passages, for interpreting one by the other; and let him seek light from such places, as principally treat of any doctrine, to explain others, where it is but incidentally mentioned, that he may clearly know, and faithfully teach, and labour in preaching the mind and will of God in his word, and speak the truth as it is in Jesus.

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

8 Or if any one is principally called to fulfil the other grand branch of the ministerial office, which consists in applying the word to conscience, for practice and improvement, either in a way of exhortation to duty, reproving for sin, and cautioning against snares and dangers; or (*ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει*) in a way of consolation, direction, and support to afflicted souls, under their various scruples, doubts, and fears, discouragements, weaknesses and burthens, temptations and troubles; let him, (*ἐν παρακλήσει*) with earnest prayer for all needful assistance, lay their distressed case to heart, and study the different circumstances of it, together

NOTES.

these expressions to relate to church officers; and it is to me observable, that the word (*διακονία*) rendered *ministry*, properly signifies the office itself; and the word (*προφητεία*) rendered *prophecy*, may very well be understood to signify the office itself likewise. (See the note on ver. 6.) But the following words, *he that teacher, he that exhorts, and he that gives, &c.* signify the persons employed in one or another branch of those offices respectively.

* Here, if I mistake not, the apostle re-assumes the consideration of what belongs to the office of *prophecy*, or *preaching*, mentioned ver. 6. which consists of doctrine, and exhortation, or consolation, ver. 8. But a wrong division of this and the next verse, which has been arbitrarily fixed in latter ages, may have been one means of misleading our thoughts.

gether with what there is in the word of God to help and relieve under them, that he may know how to address such persons, suitable to their respective conditions, and be diligent and faithful therein; and so may approve himself to God a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one his portion in due season. (2 Tim. ii. 15. and Luke xii. 42.) And as to what respects the *deacon's* office *, He, who in the execution of *that* or of any branch pertaining to it, is appointed by the church to distribute its public stock, (*ο παραδιδως*) in such a manner as may best answer the several purposes relating to its external and temporal affairs, for which it is collected; let him do it with singleness of heart, free from all selfishness, fraud, and deceit, not for favour or affection but † liberally and impartially according to the necessities and occasions that require it: He that is intrusted with the church-stock, and with a superintendency over it, to take care that it be duly applied to all its proper uses ‡; let him attend to this part of his office with great application, thoughtfulness, pains, and industry, as one that desires to manage it to the best advantage, and to acquit himself with the utmost fidelity to his trust: And he, whose peculiar province it may be to visit the sick, and them that are in bonds and prisons for the sake of Christ; to relieve the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and distressed strangers; and to take care that none of them want such things as may be needful

N O T E S.

* Here the verses might have been better divided; and the apostle's thoughts, I conceive, would have been more clearly distinguished, had the former part of this verse been added to the 7th, and the 8th begun at these words, *He that gives, let him do it with simplicity.*

† The word (*αυλωνος*) rendered *simplicity*, is translated *liberality*, 1 Cor. viii. 2.

‡ *He that rules* (*ο προϊστωνος*) properly signifies one that presides over any affair whatsoever; and so may relate to him that had the chief direction and management of the church-stock, to see that it were duly disposed of, as well as to him that presided in matters purely spiritual, or relating to church-discipline; and yet, perhaps, this might be the pastor, the whole work and care of the church being originally in his hands: For, as Dr. Owen observes, in his discourse on the true nature of a gospel-church, pag. 182. "The apostles did not utterly forego the care of providing for

the poor, which being originally committed to them by Jesus Christ, they would not wholly divest themselves of it.—And the same care is still incumbent on the *ordinary pastors and elders* of the churches, so far as the execution of it doth not interfere with their principal work and duty." However, as the work of this *president* is mentioned between other parts of the work; that belonged to the *deacon's* office, it is most natural to understand it here, as referring to one employed in that sort of service. And this sense of the expression harmonizes with, and yet preserves a proper difference between *him that gives*, and *him that shows mercy*, in the close of the verse, which seem to relate to what is done by church-officers, rather than by private Christians; because *him that rules* is placed between them; and the duties of private Christians, in distributing to the necessities of the saints, and being given to hospitality, are insisted on afterwards. (ver. 13.)

needful and convenient for them; let him engage and persist in these merciful works with all readiness of mind, without grudging his own time and labour, or the extraordinary expence, which, on some occasions, may be requisite for the support and charitable assistance of the most necessitous and afflicted among them; and let him treat them, not in a rough and haughty, stern, or cold manner; but with all affability, tenderness, and compassion, and with such alacrity of mind and countenance, as shall convince them, that he takes pleasure in helping and comforting them.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. 9 As to *general* duties that are incumbent upon you as *private* Christians; let your supreme affection, in a way of desire, esteem, and delight, be placed on the Lord Jesus*, and on God through him, without hypocrisy; in heart, and not in pretence or profession only; shew forth its sincerity by keeping his commandments, and not thinking them grievous; (1 John v. 3.) and let your love to fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures, in the various instances to be hereafter mentioned, be unfeigned and hearty; *not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth*; (1 John iii. 18.) not in a way of mere compliment, or with hypocritical airs of pity and compassion, saying to the poor among them, *Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*; without giving them those things which are needful for them: (Jam. ii. 16.) But let your love work practically toward them in all kind dispositions and good fruits, as the circumstances of things may require. From this principle, see that ye not only abstain and depart from all iniquity, from every thing that is offensive to God, defiling to yourselves, and injurious to others, and from every thing that his word and your own consciences condemn as sinful; but, in imitation of him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, keep up the utmost detestation and abhorrence of it, as the worst of all kind of evils, in its contrariety to God, and to your own happiness, that ye may have no manner of fellowship with it, but may hate it with a perfect hatred in yourselves and others, and even in those whose persons ye most sincerely and affectionately love: On the contrary, whatsoever is holy, good, and excellent in itself, approved of God, and honourable to his name, good for yourselves, and useful to others; let every thing

NOTE.

* Though the love here spoken of seems most immediately to be meant of love to one another; yet it may be considered both with relation to the Lord, whom we are to serve with servency of spirit, (ver. 11.) and without love to whom, no Christian duty towards others can be performed aright; and with relation to our neighbour, in the several branches of it that are drawn out in the following discourse.

of this nature be the object of your desire and pursuit, love and choice, and the matter of your daily practice; persevere so steadily in it, and adhere, by divine grace, so closely and resolutely to it, in speech, heart, and behaviour, that no terrors, or allurements, nor any consideration whatsoever, may ever affright, entice, or draw you off from it: And, above all things else, let it be your great concern to *cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord*, as your chief and all-comprehending good, and highest end. (*Acts xi. 23.*)

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another; with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another;

10 As to the more particular and mutual duties, which ye owe in common one to another, see that ye be ardently, tenderly, and complacentially affectionate to each other, and propense to treat one another with ingenuous friendship and kindness, by a sort of natural instinct, like that which is between parents and their children; (*φιλοστοργία*) and let there be reciprocal returns of love for love, the obligation being the same upon you all, as brethren in Christ, who should *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and are taught of God to love one another*; (*Eph. iv. 3. and 1 Thess. iv. 9.*) and let your love be as *respectful*, as I trust it is sincere, each one thinking and speaking more honourably of another's gifts, graces, and services, than of his own, and casting a mantle over his faults, instead of magnifying and exposing them; and so *in all lowliness of mind, let each esteem another better than himself*, (*Phil. ii. 3.*) as being conscious of more iniquity and disorder in his own heart, to keep him humble, than he can see in others, to degrade them; and yet let none under pretence of giving way to others, as more eminent, neglect, or think themselves excused from such duties as they are called to.

11 Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

11 Let them take heed of an indolent and careless, lazy and sluggish temper and behaviour, with respect to the affairs of the civil and religious life, and with respect to their being useful in their several stations, as though they were to do nothing at all, because they apprehend, that they cannot do so much, or so well as others; but let them engage in every service with an active vigorous spirit, and with all the fervours of love to God, and sacred zeal for his glory, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, as doing the will of God from the heart, that *whosoever their hands find to do for God, themselves, or others, they may do it with their might*; (*Eccles. ix. 10.*) as knowing that they are thereby serving the Lord Christ, in obedience to his commands, and for his honour and glory.

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation.

12 And, to animate them herein, let them go forward in God's way and work, with alacrity and delight,

tribulation; continuing instant in prayer :

light, as those who, through grace, are well assured of, and rejoice in hope of eternal salvation, to crown all their labours of love, and make them completely happy for ever : With this view and hope, let them be meek and patient towards each other, and submissive, calm and resigned to the will of God, under their present provocations, trials, and afflictions, and sustain them with an abiding and holy courage : And as nothing of this kind can be done without help from heaven, let them be earnest and importunate in humble supplication and prayer to God, with faith in the name of Christ, for all seasonable assistances of his Spirit ; and whether they receive immediate answers to their prayers, or not, let them persevere therein, (*Luke xviii. 1,—8.*) and not give over till they have obtained mercy, and found grace to help them in every time of need. (*Heb. iv. 16.*)

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints: given to hospitality.

13 And that there may be no defect in your *Christian charity*, (ver. 10.) let those of you, that are capable, show your love and compassion to Christ's poor, to such as make a credible profession of being sanctified and formed into his holy image, by readily communicating to their use, for the relief of their wants, and refreshing their bowels, like persons, who have a fellow-feeling with them in all their straits and exigencies ; that whilst, as ye have opportunity, ye make conscience, as ye ought, of *doing good unto all*, ye may especially abound therein to the household of faith : (*Gal. vi. 10.*) And when any honest, religious strangers, that are poor and destitute, come among you, or any persecuted ministers, or Christians, that are driven from house and home, are with you ; seek and pursue (*διακονεῖς*) all ways, means, and opportunities of entertaining them hospitably, without grudging or backwardness ; but with a laudable liberality, according to your circumstances, and with the greatest freedom and delight, after the examples of *Abraham* and *Lot*, who, by *entertaining strangers, entertained angels unawares*. (*Gen. xviii. 1, &c. and xix. 1, &c.* compared with *Heb. xiii. 2.*)

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

14 And as ye have *enemies*, as well as *friends*, to deal with, Take heed that ye do not misbehave toward them ; but while they are maliciously abusing and persecuting you, for righteousness sake, either with their tongues, or hands, or both ; instead of returning the like injuries to them, do ye speak civilly to them, and as well of them, as the nature of things admits of ; (*συνλογεῖσθαι*) cordially wish their happiness, and endeavour to do them good ; and, according to the command and example of the meek and humble Jesus, (*Luke vi. 28. and xxiii. 34.*) pray for the

the blessings of grace and glory, and for the blessings of Providence too, as far as may be for their real good, to come down upon them : Beg of God to convince them of their errors, to forgive their sins, and to bless them in turning them from their iniquities : And let not blessing and cursing proceed out of the same mouth and heart ; (*Jam. iii. 10.*) *Never render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.* (1 Pet. iii. 9.)

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

15 Whether ye have to do with enemies or friends, endeavour to maintain a sympathizing spirit, with humanity towards all men, as partakers of the same common nature with them ; and with brotherly affection toward your fellow Christians, as members of the same spiritual body with them : (1 Cor. xii. 26.) Instead of envying, and repining at the happiness of those that are surrounded with mercies, and enriched with blessings, whether temporal or spiritual, rejoice with them therein, that ye may share in their just and lawful, and especially in their religious joys, by *taking pleasure in their prosperity*, as God doth in that of his servants : (*Psal. xxxv. 27.*) And as, speaking after the manner of men, God's own love and tenderness to his people is expressed by his being *afflicted in all their afflictions* ; (*Isa. lxiii. 9.*) so be ye touchingly affected with the losses and miseries, fears and dangers of them that are in any trouble, relating to this world or the next : Endeavour to soothe and soften their griefs and tears, by condoling with them, and shewing your compassionate concern for them, and readiness to do what in you lies, by prayer, counsel, and all possible means, to assist and comfort them ; considering that ye yourselves are in the body, and might have been, or soon may be, in the like deplorable circumstances, (*Heb. xii. 3.*) and that your own iniquities have deserved them.

16 Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

16 Whatever difference there may be in your *outward* condition, as *men*, or in your *inward* attainments, as *Christians*, or in your *professions*, as *Jewish* or *Gentile* converts, labour to be as harmonious as possible, among yourselves : Whether ye can think just alike in *lesser* matters, or not, Be sure to cultivate a mutual friendly disposition of mind, and sameness of affection towards one another ; every one striving, by divine grace, to keep up the same charitable temper towards his brother in the Lord, and to wish as well to him, and shew the same willingness on all occasions, to do him good, as he desires and expects, that his brother should shew to himself : Neither affect pre-eminence over others ; but treat inferiors with condescending

ascending kindness; nor aspire after great things in this world; but rather look upon them with an holy indifference and disdain: If the providence of God bring any of you into strait and necessitous circumstances*; learn to submit with all humility and cheerfulness of mind to them, that your spirit may not be above your condition; but may be brought down to a contented acquiescence in it: And if any of you are raised to temporal estates and dignities, take heed of setting your hearts upon them, and being puffed up with them; and see that ye carry it with the greatest affability, courtesousness, and freedom, to persons of the lowest rank: Do not be ashamed to stoop to any proper office of brotherly love and kindness to the poorest, and most despicable saints upon earth; but be ready to treat them with benevolence, and to converse familiarly with them, that, like *David*, though a king, ye may be *companions of all them that fear God*: (Psal. cxix. 63.) And in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, as to worldly, or spiritual endowments; have a care of entertaining a high opinion of your own wisdom, on any account whatsoever; (Prov. iii. 7.) and particularly of being so vain as to imagine that ye have no further need of divine direction and influence; or as to conceit that, if ye are richer and greater in this world, ye are therefore wiser and better than others, and have no need of any assistance, counsel, or advice from them.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

17 Whether a man be your friend or foe, a Christian or a heathen, that has acted an unrighteous and injurious part toward you: Take heed of giving way to revengeful, or passionate resentments, or of going into any iniquitous or hurtful practices, by way of retaliation upon him, which would be to imitate his evil example, and make yourselves sharers in his guilt. Whatever others do, let it be your conscientious care and concern, by divine assistance, to contrive, and go into such measures of conduct, as shall be (scale) good, generous, and honourable in themselves, and every way becoming your Christian characters, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the judgment of all the unprejudiced part of mankind, (2 Cor. vii. 21.) that none, no, not the worst of your enemies, may ever be able to upbraid you with having done an unworthy or indecent thing. (Phil. iv. 8.)

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth

18 In this manner, study the things which make for the peace and welfare of all mankind, that, were

NOTE

* What is here translated, *to men of low estate*, may as well signify, *to men of mean things*. (τοῖς ταπεινοῖς) Accordingly I have taken both senses into the paraphrase.

it possible, there might be no feuds or quarrels, jars or uneasinesses between you and others, in any circumstances or relations of life : And how impracticable soever, in some situations, this may be with persons of an unhappy temper, and amidst all the disorders of this sinful and ill-natured world ; yet let nothing be wanting on your part, that may contribute towards it ; but as far as is consistent with truth and faithfulness, honour and conscience, and with your duty in other respects, labour, to the utmost of your power, to cultivate a peaceable and quiet temper and deportment, in your dealings with persons of all ranks, professions, and characters ; since the beauty and happiness of all society, whether civil or sacred, your own comfort, and the credit of religion, very much depend upon it, and cannot subsist without it.

19 That no provocation may ever transport you so far, as to abate your concern for peace, let me entreat you, my dearly beloved friends and brethren, who have known and experienced so much of the merciful kindness and forgiving grace of God toward you, to keep so strict a watch over your angry passions, as not to go about to do yourselves justice, in a way of private and personal revenge upon your enemies ; (*ver. 20.*) no, nor to seek satisfaction from them, in a due course of law, from a litigious spirit, instead of doing it from a desire of preserving the peace and order of society, and of obtaining justice to yourselves for any affronts or injuries, that ye may have received from them : But, as is most eligible, honourable, and comfortable to your own souls, labour rather, on the contrary, so far to suppress the heat and resentment of your own temper, as to turn away * their wrath with a soft answer, (*Prov. xv. 1.*) and to pacify it by yielding to it, instead of irritating it yet more and more, by intemperately and unseasonably setting yourselves to oppose and resist it ; (*Eccles. x. 4.*) or else endeavour to get out of the way of their fury, that its torrent may run off, without doing you any hurt : And when ye have done all that becomes you, to divert it, if they still continue their rage against you, calmly leave them to the impartial judgment of God, who best knows how to deal with them, and will one day right your cause : For it is recorded, (*Deut. xxxii. 35.*) to the encouragement of his people, and restraining their fretful impatience, under the oppressions of his and their enemies ; It is my supreme right and

NOTE

* Giving place to wrath, may relate *righteous thing to render tribulation to* them to the wrath of our enemies, or to *them that trouble his people.* (*1 Thess. i. 6.*)

and prerogative, says the infinitely wise and holy Lord, ruler, and judge of the universe, who can do no wrong, to inflict deserved punishments; and it belongs to me to order how and when it shall be done. I will render tribulation and wrath to evil doers, either by my immediate providence, or by the equitable laws of civil government, or by some other means in this world; or, at farthest, by terrible executions of vindictive justice on incorrigible sinners, in the great day of retribution, in the world to come: Leaving therefore the matter in God's hand, be ready to do all offices of kindness and compassion, even to the work of your enemies, instead of avenging yourselves upon them.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

20 If therefore any of your adversaries, that have been most injurious to you, and have even violently persecuted you, be ready to perish with hunger, do not neglect, much less insult, reproach, and censure him, as receiving the due reward of his evil deeds against you; but, to shew your compassionate and forgiving spirit, cheerfully and tenderly supply him with necessary and convenient food for his refreshment, (see Prov. xxv. 1, 22.) according to your ability and his wants, even as one would feed and nourish an infant, or sick person, that is not capable of helping himself. (*ψυχαὶ αὐτῶν*). If he be uneasy, and in danger of fainting, for thirst, afford him seasonable relief, by giving him something to drink, that shall be most proper for him, according to the opportunities you may have of doing it: For in this way of kind and friendly, merciful and beneficent conduct towards him, you will either mollify his spirit, and make him your friend, by melting him down into the most ingenuous confusion and relentings, at the thought of all the injuries that he has been guilty of against God, and you, his generous benefactor; and so your favours to him will answer their direct and desired end, even as the artificer dissolves hard metal, by heaping coals of fire upon it: Or else, if, after all, he shall remain so ungratefully and obstinately perverse, as not to be won upon by all your generous and endearing treatment, it will consequentially aggravate his guilt and ruin, and bring the heavier vengeance from the righteous God upon him, which will be like coals of unquenchable fire heaped upon him; and which, though you ought not to desire it, will be such a terrible retribution of his evil, that you need not meditate any revenge of your own for it.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

21 Upon the whole then, let no ill treatment, you meet with from others, get an inglorious mastery over you, so as to discompose your spirit, and inflame you

your angry, malicious, and impatient passions, or so as to make you weary of shewing love and kindness to your enemies, (*ver. 20.*) or desirous of returning evil for evil: (*ver. 17.*) This would be really to inflame your own mind, and give your adversaries the greatest opportunity of triumphing over you. But, on the contrary, labour by the grace of God, to exercise all meekness, kindness, and forbearance, under the highest provocations; and in that manner pursue the noblest of all victories over your enemies, and over your own resentments too, by returning good for evil: *For he that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city.* (Prov. xvi. 32.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How should a consideration of the endearing mercies of God engage us to yield up ourselves, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him! This is every way a most reasonable service. And how should our hearts be loosened from this world, and from all its sinful fashions, customs, and practices; and how desirous of such a renovation of our minds, by the blessed Spirit, as shall transform us into the image of God, and give us an experimental, practical, and approving acquaintance with every thing that is good in itself, pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, and agreeable to his holy will! But, be our gifts, graces, and services ever so great, we should keep up modest and humble thoughts of ourselves, and not be wise in our own conceit, or despise others; since all that we receive, is according to the measure of the gift of Christ to us, as his members, for the good of the whole body. Wonderful is the grace and care of the great Head of the church in providing for it. He has furnished it with such gifts and officers, as are necessary for its spiritual edification, and for managing its temporal concerns; and has ordered all his servants to attend to their charge with integrity, diligence, and cheerfulness, according to the grace given them, and the rule of his word.—And, as to the duties of private Christians, they are called to the sincerest love, the most affectionate deportment, and honourable regards, one towards another; to detest every thing that is sinful, and cleave to all that is good; to be vigorously active in the business of their civil and religious stations, and fervent in every service, as doing it to the Lord; to rejoice in hope of eternal life, and to be patient and resigned to the will of God, under all their trials and afflictions, and persevering in earnest prayer. How amiable are the Christian morals, founded in evangelical love; and how far surpassing all that was ever practised, or taught, by the most refined heathens! This love, which has such an influence upon, and gives such a beautiful turn to all morality, is without dissimulation: It is liberal to the necessitous, especially to the poor that bear the characters of holiness; and is hospitable to good and honest strangers, especially those that suffer for righteousness sake: It inspires us with such a fellow-feeling with others, as makes us rejoice with the happy, and mourn with the afflicted: It is humble and condescending to men of the lowest degree, and benevolent to our very enemies: It implores blessings upon the heads of those that persecute, abuse, and curse us: It chooses to refer an injured cause to the righteous judgment of God, rather than render evil for evil, or seek private revenge: It endeavours to live peaceably with all men, and behave with honour toward them: And it takes pleasure in giving food and drink to poor necessitous enemies, in melting them with kindness, and overcoming evil with good.

C H A P. XIII.

The apostle lays out the duty of subjection to civil government, with several reasons to enforce it, 1,—7. And then returns to his exhortations to mutual love, 8,—10. And goes on to temperance and sobriety, 11,—14.

TEXT.

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.

PARAPHRASE.

LET every person*, whether he be a Jewish †, or Gentile convert, ecclesiastic, or lay-man, take heed of imagining that he is under no obligation to own the authority of civil government in all lawful things, relating to this present world; though in matters of faith and practice, relating to another world, he is indeed accountable to none but God, who alone has dominion over any man's conscience. But as Christian religion makes no alteration in natural and civil rights; let every one sincerely, dutifully, and voluntarily, as from his very heart and soul, pay a reverential and peaceable obedience to the supreme magistrate, as ruling according to the laws and constitution of the government; and, by consequence, to those that are of an inferior and subordinate rank †, which is, in effect, the same thing as paying it to himself, while they legally act under him, by and according to their commission from him: For whatever

NOTES.

* As in *chap. xii. 1.* the apostle had put *the body* for the *whole man*, the better to comport with his allusion to the legal sacrifices, whose bodies were offered up to God; so he here puts the *soul* for the *person*, to intimate that it is by the *soul* that we are proper subjects of civil and moral government, and that this, as well as the *body*, is to be engaged in the obedience due to magistrates.

† The *Jews* having a proud conceit of themselves, as the only people of God, pretended that they ought not to submit to any civil governors, and pay tribute to them, unless they were of their own nation and religion, and were set over them by the special appointment of God, their supreme Lord and King; and so they were prejudiced against the *Roman* power, as unlawful, because it was both *foreign* and *heathen*: And as the apostles, and many Christians, in those days, were of the *Jewish* nation, they were stigmatized by the *Romans*, as a rebellious people, that were enemies to the public peace and order of the civil government. (*Acts* xvi. 20, 21.) In opposition therefore to this error of the *Jews*,

and in vindication of Christianity from all imputations of that kind, the apostle, with a special eye to *Judaizers*, represents the duty of all Christians owning and submitting to any civil government, under which the providence of God calls their lot, even though it were *heathen*, as the *Roman* empire then was, under which the people lived, to whom the apostle now wrote. And lest from what he himself had said about *Christian liberty*, and against persons *avenging themselves*, or *rendering evil for evil*, (*chap. xii. 17, 19.*) any should infer that the *civil magistrate* ought not to avenge injuries, nor be applied to, for the redressing of wrongs in a legal way; he insists on the necessity of government for that as well as other purposes, and rejoins Christians to submit themselves conscientiously and peaceably to it, as the ordinance of the God of nature and of providence, though it were not by so immediate and express institution, as the *Jewish* state was of old under him, as their political sovereign.

† This answers to the apostle *Peter's* saying, *Submit yourselves to every ordi-*

be the particular form of any political government * that men agree to live under, or in whose hands soever it be lodged, the supreme Lord and Ruler of the universe, by *whom kings reign, and princes decree justice*, (Prov. viii. 15.) has appointed it to be set up for the good of communities, that the order and peace, rights and liberties, lives and properties of the subject may be preserved, and defended against the private or public quarrels, injuries and outrage which the corruptions of mankind would naturally carry them into, against one another. And those very governors, that now reign over the *Roman* empire, even *Cæsar*, and such as rule under him, though strangers to the faith of Christ, are raised to their authority by the providence of God, who, according to the nature and design of government, has ordered that they should exercise it for the common welfare of every peaceable subject: And remember that, if they would abuse their power, they can do nothing against you, but by divine permission; or, as our Lord, in his own case, said to *Pilate*, the *Roman* governor, *except it were given them from above*. (John xix. 11.)

1 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.

2 So that, (whosoever he be, of what religious profession, or worldly circumstances soever, that in his private capacity opposes any legal commands of the government, which is providentially set over him, or that, in a seditious and treasonable manner, endeavours to disturb, defame, and subvert it; or whoever, to gratify his own resentments, attempts in any capacity to sling all things into anarchy and confusion, he is disobedient to the authority of God †, who has ordained the magistratic power for the protection, safety,

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ante of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as supreme, or to governors, that are sent by him. (1 Pet. 13.)

* The apostle does not here determine what any particular form of government, whether monarchy, a mixed monarchy, aristocracy, or a commonwealth, is one more than another of God; but only that civil government, for the good of the community, is his ordinance, whatever may be the particular form of it, so long as it is fit and proper, and is managed to answer that end.

† The apostle *Peter* speaks of civil government, as the ordinance of man, (1 Pet. 13.) because it is settled, as to its form and powers, and the persons that shall exercise it, by the implicit or explicit a-

greement, or consent of men: But our apostle here calls it the ordinance of God, because God, in the intimations of his providence, and in the natural reasonings and inclinations of mankind, has ordered that, by the intervention of men, some form of government should be established in the hands of some person or persons among them, for the benefit of public society, and for the punishing of offenders against it, whose corruptions are too strong to be restrained by the fear of God, which they have put away from them. And that this is the view, in which the apostle speaks of government, as the ordinance of God, which ought not to be resisted, appears from what he adds in the following verses, about the valuable ends of its institution.

safety, and welfare of mankind : And they that rise up in rebellion against it, while the fundamental laws, and principal ends for which it was instituted, are pursued in its administration, and while nothing is enjoined repugnant to the commands of God, who is to be obeyed, rather than man, (*Acts* v. 29.) such persons will incur, and bring upon themselves condign punishment, even the severest judgment, (*xēqua*) either from the hands of their rulers, who bear not the sword in vain, (ver. 4.) or else from that God who has ordained them to be guardians of the public peace and liberty, and will righteously animadvert upon the iniquity of rebels, in vindication of his own ordinance, either in this world or the next.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

3 For temporal princes, (*αρχοντες*) according to the end of their institution, for which they must give an account to God, are obliged, not to punish men for any works that are good in themselves, (like those which the Christian religion enjoins toward God and man) and that are useful to the community, in which they behave as quiet and regular subjects; but they are appointed to restrain and correct actions that are immoral in their own nature, and are injurious and disturbing to the peace and safety of the commonwealth; and to cut off those persons, by banishment or death, that are capital criminals, for the caution and preservation of others. If therefore there were no other reason for your orderly and dutiful subjection to the civil government, under which you live, than your own personal interest, would you not be afraid of provoking its terrible authority, and powerful indignation, which you must expect will fall upon you in case of disobedience and rebellion? But if you would have no cause of fearing any evil from the government, take care to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, (*1 Tim.* ii. 2.) and to do that which is morally and politically good; and then you may ordinarily hope for, and indeed ought to enjoy, the protection and favour, commendation and encouragement of public authority, instead of coming under its severe resentments.

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, he will be a terror to thee: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon

4 For the civil magistrate, by the nature and constitution of his office, is God's deputy, whom he has authorized to suppress vice, immorality, and profaneness, to keep the public peace, to maintain natural, civil, and religious rights, and to encourage every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy, for the advantage of all his good subjects: But if you violate the moral and political laws of his government, by doing any thing that has a tendency to dishonour, weaken, or destroy it, consider the dreadful consequences

on him that doth evil. quence to yourself, your family, and posterity, as well as to the whole community; what miseries it may bring upon you and them; and let the thought of that deter you from it, as ever you would be concerned for your own, and their prosperity and safety: For the sword of justice, to punish offenders, is not put into the magistrate's hands by Providence, like a mere glittering ensign of authority, to no manner of purpose, as though it were not to be used against the turbulent and disobedient; For he is ordained and deputed of God, not only for the praise of them that do well, but likewise for *the punishment of evil doers*, (1 Pet. ii. 14.) according to the commission, which God, to *whom vengeance primarily belongs*, (chap. xii. 19.) has given him to support the authority of government, and inflict pains and penalties in executions of justice upon criminals, as far as any are found to be so by overt-acts, which are the only ones that can fall under the magistrate's cognizance; it being God's peculiar prerogative, to know, judge of, and punish for evil thoughts, as they lie merely in the heart.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

5 Ye are therefore obliged, not only in point of interest, to pay all due subjection to the magistrate's authority, for fear of the punishment which he is able, and concerned to inflict upon the injurious, the refractory, and rebellious; but also from a principle of religion, and conscience toward God, as acting in obedience to his ordination of magistracy for the preservation of common rights; to his providence, which has lodged it in the hands of those that are set over you; and to his demand of your dutiful subjection to them, as they are the public guardians of the state.

6 For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

6 For this is the reason why ye also pay taxes and duties, that are laid upon you by the legislative power; and why every subject is bound, according to his station and circumstances, to contribute, by these means, to the support and dignity of the government, in return for the necessary care and pains, solicitude and fatigues, expence and dangers of those, that are employed in managing it to the advantage of the public; For they are God's vicegerents, by whom he rules nations and kingdoms, and whose very business it is, by virtue of their office, to lay themselves out continually to the utmost of their power, for securing the rights and liberties of all their good subjects, and for punishing those that would invade them, or would injure the legislature, or their neighbours.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom

7 Upon the whole then, See that ye make conscience of paying to all mankind, to supreme and subordinate magistrates, as well as others, whatsoever is due

whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

due to them by divine and human laws, and by the just reasons of things, which require suitable compensations for value received: And as our Lord, in answer to those that asked him, *Whether it were lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?* said, *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, though he were neither of the Jewish nation, nor of their religion; (*Matth. xxii. 17, 21.*) so ye should not make any scruple, but think yourselves obliged, to pay such taxes, imposts, rates, and customs, without fraud or deceit, as are legally charged upon your persons, commodities, or estates, and are in right owing to him for his great expence and trouble in executing his high and important trust: And as, in this manner, ye are honestly and readily to contribute to the support of his government; so, that ye may think and speak of him suitable to his exalted station, Be afraid of provoking his anger; and labour to cultivate a becoming reverence and esteem of him in your minds; and, not only so, but honour him likewise in all outward expressions of respect, on account of his authority and dignity; this sort of homage being due to him, under the character of your political father and lord, as it is to your fleshly parents and masters, and indeed to every superior, in their respective places.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

8 Let none of you be backward, or behind-hand, in paying the several debts of money, respect, or service, but now mentioned, (*ver. 7.*) or that are owing from you to any persons whatsoever, according to your various concerns with them, whether they be superiors, inferiors, or equals, and according to what has been already insisted on. (*Chap. xii. 9, 21.*) But, after all that ye have done, or can do, in equity toward them; remember there is one important, delightful, and comprehensive debt, which ye are always to be paying, and still owing, and never to think yourselves discharged from; and which, conscientiously attended to, will effectually dispose you to render to every one all his dues, according to the utmost of your power; and *that* is, to maintain a sincere and cordial love one to another, as becomes men and Christians, that ought to be ever desiring, consulting and promoting each other's good by all proper means, and in all circumstances, as long as ye live: For the nature of love to fellow-creatures, in its due latitude and fervour, and as founded upon, and springing from our love to God; and from a sense of his love in Christ, to us, (*1 John iv. 7, — 21.*) is so excellent, and sweetly powerful and engaging, that, as far as any one feels it glowing in his own bosom, and is found in the exercise of it, unto the producing of correspondent

correspondent effects towards another, whom he considers in a view of kindness as his neighbour, (*ver.* 9, 10.) he has, so far, filled up (*πεπληρωμένος*) the requirements of the second table of the moral law: And, were your love to one another perfect, your obedience to all its commands of that sort, would be so too.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

9 For, to specify its principal duties in the following negative precepts, which include their contrary affirmatives, the tenor of them runs thus; You shall not be guilty, in heart or behaviour, of fornication, adultery, unnatural mixtures, or any sort of uncleanness; nor entice or draw others into them; but shall maintain an entire chastity and modesty in thoughts and desires, looks, words, and actions: You shall not unlawfully take away your own, or others lives; nor do any thing that tends towards it, by indulging wrath, envy, malice, and revenge, or any exorbitant passions; by intemperance in meats and drinks or excess of any kind; nor by violent provocations, quarrels, duels, and causeless fightings, that may hurt, wound, or destroy yourselves or others; but shall carefully study and endeavour to do all that you justly may and can, to preserve, cherish, and defend your own and their lives, health, and strength, by a meek and patient, sober and peaceable, contented and beneficent behaviour: You shall not injure the property of others by forcible robbery, or secret theft, or purloining; by encouraging any to steal, or by knowingly receiving stolen goods; by fraud, cheating, and knavery, in contracts and commerce; by oppression, extortion, or unnecessary and vexatious lawsuits; nor by any covetous desires or attempts to take, or withhold from others what is their right and due; but you ought to be faithful and just in all your dealings with mankind; and labour, by all lawful means, to procure, preserve, and promote their temporal prosperity, as well as your own: You shall not do any thing that is prejudicial to veracity and integrity between man and man, or to your neighbour's reputation or interest, by equivocations, lies, and slanders, backbiting, tale-bearing, or reviling; and especially not by perjuries and false depositions in courts of judicature; nor by concealing such truths as may be to the advantage of his character, and to the procuring of justice to his cause; nor shall you admit of any grudgings, envyings, or grievings in your heart at his credit, honour, and good name in the world; nor any way contribute to, no, nor so much as secretly wish, or take pleasure in, a blast upon them; but you must have the strictest regard to truth in all that you

you think, say, and do towards every one, whether friend or enemy; must entertain as charitable an opinion of him as the nature of things admits of; must freely own all that is good in him, and gently cover his infirmities, and faithfully vindicate his innocence under false accusations; and sincerely and heartily do what in you lieth, to favour and support his good name, and righteous cause; to discountenance every false and injurious report, and to receive and spread, as occasions require, every good report concerning him, as you would concerning yourself: You shall not murmur, or be dissatisfied at those stations and worldly circumstances in which the providence of God has placed you, or for want of any good things that others are possessed of; nor repine, or be envious at any of their agreeable accommodations; nor ought you to have covetous and uneasy cravings in your own mind after their affluence, or any of their enjoyments, as wishing that, instead of being theirs, they might be your own; but you should humbly, quietly, and thankfully acquiesce in the wise and good, sovereign and holy disposals of Divine Providence toward yourself and them, and rejoice in your neighbour's prosperity, how necessitous and afflicted forever your own condition may be; and, instead of desiring to lessen his circumstances, you should be ready to do every thing you are capable of, to preserve and enlarge them, as if they were your own. And whatever other precept might be mentioned, as relating to second table duties, and particularly to those that the *fifth* commandment * enjoins inferiors to pay to all their superiors, some of which were taken notice of but now: (*ver. 7.*) All these, put together, are summarily comprehended in, and may be reduced to this one head of account, (*ὡς τὴν τὴν λόγῳ ἀνακρίψαντες* *ἢ τῷ*) You shall love all your fellow-creatures, and especially those that fear God, as sincerely and truly as yourself; and, from this generous principle, you should conscientiously act in all things toward them, as you would wish, and think reasonable for them to do toward yourself, were you in their circumstances, and they in yours.

10 Love work-eth no ill to his neighbour: therefore

10 Where undissembled and fervent love reigns in the heart, it sweetly and powerfully restrains the man from desiring or designing, and from knowingly and willingly

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* What the apostle says, (*ver. 7.*) about paying tribute, custom, fear, and honour, to those to whom they are due, comes under the obligation of the *fifth* commandment, and that, added to those

which are recited in this ninth verse, takes in all the duties of the second table, as laid down in the decalogue, *Exod. xx. 12,—17.*

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willingly doing any thing that is mischievous to another; and it constrains him to perform the kindest offices to all, as occasions require, like the good Samaritan, who had compassion upon the wounded traveller, and treated him as if he had been his nearest friend and neighbour, though he was both a stranger, and a man of a different religion from himself. (*Luke x. 33, &c.*) We may therefore well conclude, that love to our neighbour, and especially to the household of faith, as resulting from love to God, is in its genuine nature, and correspondent actings, radically, intentionally, and constructively, a compliance with, and will bring on an unreserved respect unto all the duties of the second table of the law, which requires that no evil, but all good, should be done to others, even as to ourselves.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

11 And (*see rule*) this comprehensive duty of love to our fellow Christians, and to all mankind, is to be cultivated with diligence, and without delay, as knowing, observing, and bearing in mind, that now, under our present trials, and under the light and grace, assistances and encouragements of the gospel, the proper time and hour, opportunity and season of our day is come, and is but short, in which we are loudly called to shake off sloth, indolence, and carnal security, and to rouse out of a supine, careless, and drowsy frame of spirit, and to be upon our watch, that we may not be found asleep when the Bridegroom comes; (*Matth. xxv. 5.*) but may awake to righteousness, and not sin against God, or others, (*1 Cor. xv. 34.*) directly contrary to that great principle of love, which is *the fulfilling of the law*: (*ver. 10.*) For we, who are true believers, shall not only be soon freed from the persecutions which the carnal Jews stir up against us; but a much greater salvation*, of which all the temporal deliverances of the people of God are figures and emblems, and which they are looking,

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* If, as some suppose, here is any reference to the deliverance of Christians from the persecutions of the Jews, that should cease at the general destruction which was soon coming upon that people, I would rather consider it as emblematical of a greater salvation than as what is chiefly intended: For though by the national desolation, which was brought upon them, they lost their power and influence for exciting troubles against the professors of Christ's name; yet the *heathen* persecutions were afterwards as violent as that which had been stirred up by the Jews; and the apostle

concludes his argument on this head with an exhortation, (*ver. 14.*) to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. which must certainly have a respect to the spiritual and eternal salvation they were looking for: And as he had before represented the gospel-salvation, as already come to the Gentiles, to enrich and reconcile them, (*chap. xi. 11, 15.*) I cannot but apprehend that they too much narrow his design, who understand him only to mean, that a fuller spread of the gospel in the conversion of the Gentiles was at hand, through the near approach of the destruction of the Jewish church and nation.

looking, longing, and hoping for, draws on apace: Even a complete deliverance from all the imperfections and troubles of this present life, and from the wrath to come, together with an endless advancement to all possible blessedness and glory in the heavenly state, hastens towards us, or rather we are hastening towards it, so as to be every day approaching nearer and nearer to it, than we were when we first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life; and therefore we should be the more patient and watchful under all our present trials, and the more vigorous and chearful in dispatching our Christian course, as knowing that all its fatigues will soon be over-past, and crowned with immortal honour, rest, and joy.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

12 The time, not only of *Jewish* persecutions, and of our various afflictions and trials; but also of our ignorance, unbelief, and sinful ways, which on account of its uncomfortableness and unsuitness for service, may be compared to the darkness of the night; this deplorable night, some shadows of which will stretch over us, as long as we are in this imperfect world, is well-nigh wearing off; its former and worst part, which lay upon us, during our state of unregeneracy, is already past and gone; the day of gospel-light and holiness to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, has begun to dawn in our souls, like *the morning light, which shines more and more to the perfect day*; (Prov. iv. 18.) and the day of our complete redemption from all darkness, sin, and sorrow, and of unclouded light and glory in a better world, is ready to break upon us, as well as the day of freedom from *Jewish* troubles, which will soon appear; that nation being just on the point of falling into ruin. Let it therefore be our care, that, by divine assistance, we may have no more fellowship with; but may utterly abhor and abandon, divest ourselves of, and put far away from us, all those sinful practices, which may well be called works of darkness, as they proceed from the benighted obscurity and deep corruption of human nature, and tend to everlasting darkness and misery, and are so vile and shameful, as to be commonly transacted in the night, because they are not fit to be seen in the day-time: And as we profess ourselves to be Christians, that are renewed in the *spirit of our mind*, and engaged in a holy warfare; (Eph. iv. 23. and vi. 12.) Let it be our great concern to put on such graces, and live in the daily exercise of them, as are grounded in knowledge, (Col. iii. 10.) and are like a robe of light for purity, excellence, and splendor, fit for the children of light to wear, when they go abroad in the day-time, and are exposed to open view; and which

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like the bright and glittering armour that warriors put on, will be our defence in the day of battle, and will shine, at length, in all the lustre of the light of glory.

13 Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

13 In this view and prospect *, Let us take heed that our whole conversation and behaviour in the world be constantly, uniformly, and progressively, (*συνεχῶς*) well adjusted in a decorous and becoming manner, answerable to the character of Christians, who have the advantage of the light of the gospel, and of the Spirit of God, to direct us in our way and walk; and whose actions will bear the severest examination and observation of others, and of our own consciences, as in the light of noon-day: Let us labour, by the grace of God, that none of our time be spent like theirs, who are *drunken in the night*; (1 Thess. v. 7.) or in any excess of eating and drinking, feasting and carousing, which inflame the blood, intoxicate the mind, and often carry people into all manner of revellings and debaucheries; nor let us ever be guilty of any sort of whoredoms, that are wont to be committed in bed-chambers; or of any kind of immodest looks, words, gestures, actions, or dress, that have a tendency to excite impure desires, and unlawful propensions in ourselves, or others; nor let us ever suffer ourselves to give into angry contentions, quarrels, and scoldings with any one whomsoever, much less with our Christian brethren; nor into grudgings or repinings at their prosperity and happiness; or secret wishes, much less endeavours, to lessen them. As these are all *works of darkness*, (ver. 12.) the former of which naturally lead on to the rest; and as they are all forbidden in the law, (ver. 9.) let us never give way to either of them.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

14 But, on the contrary, as ever ye would live like children of the day, that are awakened out of sleep, and would expect the salvation that is continually approaching to believers, (ver. 11.) see that ye be all over covered with Christ, as with a garment, and be found in him: Put on his righteousness, by daily renewed acts of faith, for your discharge from all transgressions of the law, and title to eternal salvation; put on also his holy image, by suitable exercises of every grace, and by a religious walk and conversation, in imitation of him, to prove the sincerity of your faith, and to make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and put on a becoming profession of Christ, that shall be visible to all

4 C 2
N O T E

* The famous *Augustine*, as is remarked by several commentators, was converted by reading, and reflecting, upon this text.

around you. In this manner, be ye continually receiving, owning, honouring, and making use of the Lord Jesus Christ, in all his offices, as anointed of God to guide and govern, as well as save you; Be diligent herein, *that ye may be found of him in peace:* (2 Pet. iii. 14.) And take heed that ye never inordinately consult, care, or provide for the body, to the neglect of the concerns of your precious souls; much less forecast in your minds to do any thing, that may minister fuel for the corruption of your hearts, to promote, indulge, and gratify, their sensual and sinful inclinations and desires, or to *fulfil the lusts of the flesh* in any instance whatsoever. (Gal. v. 16.)

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a wise and important appointment of Providence is civil government, for the good of mankind; for a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well! And what a friend is Christian religion to its happiness, peace, and order! It directs rulers how to answer the valuable ends of the high trust which God has committed to them; and teaches subjects to yield all dutiful obedience to them, for conscience sake, as well as for escaping the vengeance of the sword of justice, and reaping the benefits of government. While magistrates rule for the general good of the community, according to the laws and constitution of the state, we ought to reverence and honour them in their public character, as the ministers and ordinance of God for good, and to pay the customs and tributes that are their due, as an equitable and grateful return for their care, trouble, and expence in protecting us, and our rights and properties: Public as well as private debts, ought to be faithfully discharged; only we are never to think that we have so fully paid the debt of love one to another, as to be under no further obligations to it. What an amiable and constraining principle is true Christian love! It inclines and engages us to fulfil all the duties of morality towards our neighbour; it restrains us from adultery, murder, theft, falsehood, and lying, and from all covetous desires of any man's goods and enjoyments; and it obliges and disposes us to a performance of all the contrary duties, yea, of every thing contained in the second table of the law. But, alas! how imperfect is the present state of things! The best that can be said of it is, that the night is far spent, and the day is at hand; and that complete salvation is continually approaching nearer and nearer to every true believer. How should these thoughts excite Christians to shake off sloth, and renounce all works of darkness; such as rioting and drunkenness, uncleanness and wantonness, strife and envy; and to walk honourably, as becomes children of the light and of the day, and as those that put on Christ, and the illustrious armour with which he has furnished them, to guard against all evil; and that are careful never to do any thing to indulge the flesh, and fulfil its sinful desires!

C H A P. XIV.

The apostles cautions Jewish converts against judging, and Gentile believers against despising, one the other, on account of their contrary opinions and practices, relating to such indifferent things as ceremonial meats and days, 1,—13. And exhorts the Gentiles to take heed of giving offence in their use of such things, 14,—23.

TEXT.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive you, but

PARAPHRASE.

WHEREAS there are different opinions among you, about some rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, insomuch that Jewish converts look up

not to doubt-
disputations.

on them as ordinances of God, that are still to be observed, because they were formerly of his appointment, and they themselves have been taught, and used to practise them from their childhood up; and *Gentile* believers, being led further into their Christian liberty, are persuaded that the gospel-dispensation lays no obligation upon them to pay any regard to those things, especially considering that they never were under that law. This being the state of the case between you, I earnestly entreat the *Gentile* converts among you to bear with, and condescend to the weakness, prejudices, and scruples of your *Jewish* brethren, that are not so well satisfied about the nature of Christian liberty, and the abolition of those ancient rites; and not to object against them on this account; but to receive them into your friendship, affection, and communion, without any coolness, or disrespect, for their different thoughts and reasonings about things, which, for the present, may be left as matters of indifference, while their temple is yet standing; and without troubling them with perplexing disputes of little moment, such as relate to ceremonial meats and days, and things of a like trivial nature, which tend rather to puzzle and disquiet their minds, than to godly edifying.

1 For one belie-
veth that he may
eat all things: ano-
ther who is weak,
eateth herbs.

2 As to *meats*, the *Gentile* convert indeed, (*μὴ*) who is well grounded in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, is satisfied in his own conscience, that there is now no religious distinction of them, as of old among the *Jews*, and that he may lawfully, and without scruple, eat any kind of food that is sold in the market, and set before him*. (1 Cor. x. 25, 27.) But (*ἀλλ'*) another, who was converted from among the *Jews*, and through the prejudices of education, and the obscurity of his light, is defective, and mistaken in this point of Christian liberty, and is even offended, and stumbles at it; he thinks it unlawful for him to eat any sort of food that was forbidden by the law of *Moses*, or any meat that was not killed in a legal manner, by pouring out the blood: (*Lev. xvii. 10,—14.*) And lest he should sin unawares, by partaking of such entertainments, as are promiscuously used among the *Gentiles*, without any regard to the different sorts of flesh, or different manner of dress-
ing

N O T E

* They that thought they might eat all sorts of food, which is here meant by *all things*, were, doubtless, mostly converts from among the *Gentiles*; and they, who scrupled it, were mostly those that were converted from among the *Jews*: Though it is not improbable, but

that some of the *Jewish* believers might be so far enlightened in the doctrine of Christian liberty, as to eat them; and some of the *Gentiles* might be persuaded by *Jewish* zealots to think it unlawful so to do.

ing it, which are allowed, or disallowed, by that law; he confines himself, especially when he takes a meal with *them*, to the eating of herbs, as *Daniel* and his companions did, in *Babylon*, to the eating of pulse. (*Dan. i. 12.*)

3 Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

3 In this case, let Christian charity and forbearance be exercised on both sides. As persons of superior light are too prone to despise others; let the believing *Gentile*, who, being fully instructed in his Christian liberty, can, with a good conscience, eat any thing that Providence affords for the sustenance of nature, be upon his guard, lest he pride himself in his knowledge, and think meanly of his brother, and treat him with contempt, as a poor, superstitious, over-nice, humoursome, and weak creature, that, needlessly indeed; and yet conscientiously, abstains from such meats, as were deemed unclean under the law: And, on the contrary, as persons of weak, narrow, unprejudiced, though honest minds, are most apt to be severely uncharitable to others, that differ from them, though but in trifling matters; let the believing *Jew*, who, for want of better light, about the liberty of the gospel-state, scruples eating some kinds of meat, take heed that he be not censorious of his brother, who, with a good conscience, freely eats them, and that he do not condemn him, as a loose, unguarded, irreligious professor, though he maintains all the essential and important articles of the Christian faith, and has a sincere respect to every moral precept: For, whatever others may judge of him*, God has made him accepted in the Beloved, has taken him into his favour and family, and admitted him to all the privileges and blessings of his church and people, without any regard to ceremonial observances.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

4 Since God has received him, Who art thou, a poor, sinful, ignorant, and fallible mortal, that you should assume to yourself an authority of sitting in judgment upon his conscience, and of passing a sentence of condemnation upon his state, for using a liberty which he is satisfied his Lord allows him, as though you were to determine, whether he is sincere, and shall have the privileges of Christ's house, as one accepted of him here, and whether he shall be acquitted

N O T E.

* *God has received him*, some think relates to him that eats not, as well as to him that eats. But I apprehend that the thread of the discourse carries it only to him that eats: For he is the nearest antecedent; and the expostulation in the

next verse is with him that judgeth; which plainly points out the believing scrupulous *Jew*, whom the apostle here cautions against judging him that eats; and so he goes on to speak to the *Jews* converts.

acquitted and owned of him in the great day of account, or not? (This would be like taking upon you, to judge whether the domestic servant, (*αἰχμαλωτός*) who is not your's, but another man's property, shall be approved of by him, as one of his family, or not, which you have nothing to do with :) He is accountable, not to you, but only to his own Lord and Master, even Christ, (*Matth. xxiii. 10.* and *John xiii. 13.*) whose judgment alone he must abide by : Nor is his state to be decided by your opinion of him ; but he must be acquitted, or cast, at Christ's bar, who, in opposition to men, has the sole right of judging him ; and (*δὲ*) God having received him, (*ver. 3.*) whatever you may think of him, (*κατανοήσαι*) he shall be established in the faith and fellowship, hope, comfort, and holiness of the gospel, and shall stand with boldness in the day of judgment : For that God, who has taken him into his house and covenant, and will faithfully perform his promises to every true believer, is able to keep him from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (*Jude ver. 24.*)

5 One man esteemeth one day above

5 Again, as to ceremonial days*, that were ordered to be kept holy under the *Mosaic* dispensation, such

N O T E.

* We are not to suppose, that what is here said about the distinction of days, is to be understood as if it were an indifferent matter, whether any weekly Sabbath were to be regarded, and preferred to other days, or not : For this I take to be a moral obligation, on the foot of the fourth commandment, which enjoins, in general, that a weekly Sabbath be kept holy to the Lord, as well as that the seventh day, in particular, should continue to be observed by the Jews to that purpose throughout the *Mosaic* dispensation, to which the delivering of the law at mount *Sinai* belonged : And as that Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, in transferring it from the seventh, to the first day of the week, made no alteration of the general command, *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy ;* (*Exod. xx. 8.*) so neither the Jewish, or Gentile Christians denied the obligation to observe a weekly Sabbath ; and therefore it could not be said of either of them, that they esteemed every day alike, though the Jewish converts might be for retaining the seventh, and those of the Gentiles were for celebrating the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath. This was accordingly the usual day of their stated assemblies for the

worship of God, and was known among them by the name of the Lord's day, in like manner, and for like reasons, as the ordinance of breaking bread was called the Lord's supper. (See the note on *Acts xx. 6.*) Nor are the days here referred to, to be understood of religious fasts, whether public or private, on special important occasions : For it is not to be supposed, that either of these parties of Christians thought, that no difference was to be made between those solemn days and others ; since the Pharisees and John's disciples fasted often, and our Lord himself not only gave directions to his disciples for fasting, but said, that, after his departure from them, they should be obliged to such religious exercises. (*Matth. vi. 16,—18,* and *ix. 15.*) The days therefore here intended, relate to the Jewish festivals, so far forth as they were of a ceremonial and typical nature, but were still thought to be obligatory by many of the believing Jews, while the Gentile Christians took them to be abolished : Accordingly the distinction of days is here annexed to, and put in the same rank with that of meats, which were prohibited by the ceremonial law.

above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

such as the merely *Jewish* festivals; one person indeed, (*or μὴ*) as is mostly the case of the *Jewish* converts, accounts and determines in his own thoughts, that these are sacred, and ought to be religiously observed, in distinction from common days, according to the *Levitical* law: (see the note on *ver.* 2.) But another person (*or δὲ*) thinks, with the *Gentile* converts, that, under the gospel-state, no days are to be ceremonially distinguished from others, as they were under the typical dispensation, which is now at an end; but that, in the ordinary course of things, every day, which Christ has not distinguished for sacred use, is to be esteemed and employed, one as much as another, for fulfilling the various civil, moral, and religious duties of common life. Now as to such sort of things as these, upon which no great stress is to be laid at present, considering all circumstances on both sides; let every one seriously weigh them, and determine for himself about them, according to the best light he can get from the word of God; leaving others to judge for themselves, and to do what their consciences tell them is their duty.

6 To dispose you to a becoming Christian temper one towards another, under your different sentiments and practices, with relation to all these ceremonial observances, it is to be considered, and charitably to be believed, that the converted *Israelite*, who thinks himself obliged to keep any of the *Jewish* festivals, doth it from a principle of conscience toward God, in obedience to what he takes to be still his command, that he may thereby glorify him, and particularly in honour to our Lord Jesus Christ*; as supposing that he has confirmed all his ancient institutions which he delivered to *Israel* by the hand of *Moses*: And, on the contrary, the converted *Gentile*, who doth not observe any of those days, proceeds upon a like principle of conscience toward God, with a view to his glory, and particularly to the honour of the Lord Christ; as believing that, by his authority, the obligation to keep such days is now laid aside; and that to think otherwise would be a practical, though undesigned, denial of the liberty of the gospel-state, and of Christ's having come to put an end to all typical and ceremonial rites. In like manner, it is to be remembered

NOTE

* To the Lord seems here, and in *ver.* 8, 9. to mean to the Lord Christ; and as he, appearing under the character of the *Yehovah* of *Israel*, delivered the law to *Moses*; (see the note on *Acts* vii. 38.) so God and the Lord, in this verse,

may be considered as terms of the same import, to signify the only true God, both of them as applicable to Christ, who is the God, to whom Christians give thanks, as well as to the Father by him

membered, that the *Gentile* believer, who, having received light concerning his Christian liberty, eats any sort of meats, without scruple, doth it with a sincere aim at the glory of God, and particularly of Christ, who is Lord of all; as believing that he would have him assert this privilege: For, in testimony of his being well satisfied that he herein doth right, he religiously asks a blessing on his food, of what kind soever it be, and gives thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Father by him, for the great goodness that has provided it, and allowed him freely to eat of it, as may be most suited to the necessity, convenience, and innocent delight of life: And the less enlightened Christian, who scruples eating indifferently all sorts of meat, abstains from those, that were prohibited in the law of *Moses*, with an upright intention of glorifying God, and our Lord Jesus, the immediate giver of that law, by submitting to his authority, who once forbade the use of some meats, and seems, to him, not to have revoked the prohibition; and, as an evidence of his sincerity herein, he praises the name of the Lord for giving him enough of other sorts of food, and for preserving him from eating such, as he thinks would be a defilement to him; and he thankfully accepts, and begs of God to bless those provisions to him, which he is allowed to eat of: And so they both, aiming at the glory of God, and of the great Redeemer, ought to bear with one another, in their different opinions and practices, as to these little points, and receive each other as brethren.

7 For none of us
beth to himself,
and no man dieth
himself.

7 For as no one ought, so none of us, who are true believers in Christ, dares to live, as if he were his own lord and master, so as to make his own humour, or private views, in these, any more than in other cases, the governing end of his life; no, nor to give way to any influence from such mean, low, and selfish motives in religious concerns: And as no man ought, so no real Christian desires, to die, merely to get rid of present troubles; nor doth he aim at only leaving a good name behind him, among his friends and party, at death; no, far be it from Christians of any denomination, to think of living, or dying at such a rate.

8 For whether
live, we live
to the Lord:
whether we
die unto
the Lord: whether
live therefore,
die, we are the
Lord's.

8 For whether we, who are real converts, live a longer or shorter time, it is, as it ought to be, in obedience to the will and command of our Lord and Saviour, and with an aim at his glory, that we may serve and honour him, in all that we think and say, suffer and do: And whether we be cut off by a natural, or violent death, it is with resignation to the will and appointment of the Lord Christ, who died

for us ; with a fiducial commitment of our departing spirits into his hands ; and with a desire that we may glorify him, and leave a testimony to the truth and excellence of Christian religion, and to the power of his grace, in our dying moments, and may go to be with him, to behold his glory : Whether therefore we continue to live in this world, or be called, sooner or latter, in any manner whatsoever, to die out of it, we are Christ's property and devoted servants, at his dispose ; and are enabled to rely entirely upon him, to approve ourselves to him, and to glorify him with our bodies and spirits, which are his ; and so whether we be *Jewish* or *Gentile*, weaker or stronger believers, it hereby appears whose we are, and whom we serve, and that for us to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

9 For this is the very end which our Lord Jesus had in view, and which was designed of God the Father, to be answered by him when he laid down his life as an atoning sacrifice for sin, and rose from the dead to be exalted to his throne, and when he accordingly lived again (*anagoroi*) in the heavenly state to secure his purchase, and take possession, in human nature, of that glory which he had with the Father before the world was ; (*John xvii. 5.*) the very end. I say, of all this was, that he, in his office-capacity, as head over all things to the church, might have an absolute, universal, and sovereign dominion over them that are dead, and them that are, or ever shall be alive upon earth, and might have the ordering of all things that relate to every ones living and dying, as to the eternal consequences of both ; and especially that he might maintain his peculiar property, and be glorified, in those that the Father has given him, by supporting them under the *stroke*, and delivering them from the *king* of death, and by receiving their souls, and afterwards raising their bodies, to an immortal state of blessedness ; as well as by influencing, governing, and disposing of them for his own glory in this world, and reaping the everlasting honours, that are due to him from them, and on their account, in the world to come.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

10 But still further to enforce the caution that has been already given, (*ver. 3.*) Why should any of you, who cannot get over your scruples about meats and days, judge and condemn your Christian brother, who can, as though he were a mere libertine and presumptuous professor, only because he is satisfied that he need not make any difference in these things? Or, on the other hand, Why should such of you, as think it your duty to make use of your Chris-

tian liberty, with respect to these things, despise any one of your brethren in the Lord; whose conscientious scruples about them still hang upon him? Why should you disdain him, as though he were a poor deluded bigot, not worth your notice? What room can there be for either of these unfriendly and unchristian ways of treating one another? Ye certainly therein go beyond your sphere, and take a judgment upon you, which do not belong to you; and which ye ought to be afraid of rashly going into: For both the strong and weak, the despiser, and the despised, the censurer and the censured; yea, whatever our character and conduct be, all and every one of us must, ere long, be brought before the awful tribunal of Christ, to take our trial at his bar, where all things will be called over again; and he, as Lord and Judge of all, will set them in a just light, and pass a decisive sentence for, or against us, accordingly, to our inexpressible happiness, or confusion for ever.

11 For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

11 For in an ancient prophecy of Christ, (*Isa. xlv. 23.*) where he is introduced under the character of *Jehovah*, to assure us of his being a divine person *, we find words to this effect, which are recorded, 'as uttered by, and with relation to himself, I, speaking after the manner of men, have sworn by myself, to shew that the decree is irreversible, that as surely as I am the only living and true God, who necessarily, essentially, and eternally have life in myself, and am

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N O T E

* The apostle here plainly intimates, that what was said in *Isa. xlv. 23.* is to be applied to Christ. And if we look into the prophecy itself, we shall find that in the next preceding, and the two following verses, the very person, who is brought in as making this solemn declaration, speaks of himself, in distinction from all idols, as the only true God, who says, *to all the ends of the earth, Look unto me, and be ye saved*; and is spoken of under the character of that *Jehovah*, in whom we have righteousness and strength, even in him, to whom it is said, *Men shall come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed*; and in this Lord, or *Jehovah*, *all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory*. All which passages are so exactly answered in the New Testament-account of the characters sustained, and benefits brought in by Christ, and of the regards that are to be paid to him, as to leave no reasonable ground to doubt but that they belong to him. (See my Discourses on *Jesus Christ God-man*, pag. 50,—

55, &c.) And so, taking the whole together, we have here a strong attestation to the proper divinity of this great Judge of the world, who *swore by himself*, which is, in effect, the same thing as swearing by his *life*, or saying, *As I live, unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*, by way of confession or acknowledgment of his absolute sovereignty and supreme dominion, that is, every one, either freely, or by constraint, shall pay him divine homage, which is signified by *bowing the knee, and swearing to him*; and this will be most eminently, publicly, and completely verified in the universal subjection of all mankind to Christ, at the day of judgment. Let me also take this occasion to observe, that as God's swearing by himself, is often expressed by his saying, *As I live*; they approach too near an oath, peculiarly proper to God, who in common conversation say, *As I live*, or as *I am alive*, or as *I am a living man*, and the like; to gain credit to their words.

the fountain and author of all life to others, the whole human race shall be brought into such an entire subjection to me, whether they will or not, in their final appearance at my bar, as is signified by bowing the knee, in token of humble homage, and by swearing to me, and thereby owning me with the tongue, as the great God and judge of all, to whom they are accountable, and by whom their eternal state must be decided.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

12 From hence then it plainly appears, that as every individual of mankind, of what character, nation, or profession soever he be; so every one of us, in particular, must be called to an account, not for the mistakes or miscarriages of others, but for his own faith and practice, which he shall be obliged to answer for at the judgment-seat of Christ, (2 Cor. v. 10.) who himself is God, and by whom, in his office-capacity, God the Father will judge the whole world.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

13 Let none of us therefore presume any longer to invade Christ's prerogative, or anticipate his judgment, by taking upon us to censure and condemn one another. But*, to lead you into a much better way of judging, let those of you, that can use your Christian liberty with a good conscience, think and determine (*αποφασισατε*) in your own minds, that no one ought to indulge to so free a use of what may be in itself lawful, as thereby to grieve, ensnare, and lay an obstacle in the way of his Christian brother, who would be offended at it; or to draw him into sin by tempting him, either to go into uncharitable censures, or to take a liberty of doing that with a doubting conscience, which another doth with a well satisfied mind.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is no thing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

14 For my part, I clearly understand, and am thoroughly persuaded upon the authority of the Lord Jesus, (*Mark vii. 19.*) and from the nature and design of his death, which was to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to God, and take away all religious distinction between them; and to remove the curse that the fall had brought upon creature-enjoyments, in token of which the use of some meats was forbidden in the ceremonial law; and I am fully assured, by special revelation from Christ to me, that now, under the glorious liberty of the gospel, every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with

NOTE.

* This ought to have been made the beginning of a verse. For here the apostle enters upon his caution, particularly of the Gentile converts, against an un-

guarded and unseasonable use of their Christian liberty, to the offence of their Jewish brethren, that would be stumbled at it.

with thanksgiving, (1 Tim. iv. 4.) and that no sort of food is, in its own nature, morally unclean, no, nor any longer ceremonially so; Christ having put an end to the distinction of clean and unclean meats, to signify that all things are now pure to him that believes; (Tit. i. 15.) and I am satisfied, that there is now no distinction, as there was under the Old Testament-dispensation, between clean and unclean nations; as if either of them, as nations, were to be excluded from God's covenant, while others of them are admitted into it. Yet as, in certain circumstances, there may arise a moral defilement to a man's conscience, even by doing what is in itself lawful; so if any one really thinks in his heart, that this or the other sort of food is still forbidden, and ought not to be received, he, by eating it, would violate the dictates of his own conscience, and so defile it, by doing what it tells him is offensive to God.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

15 But, on the other hand, supposing that any of you are ever so well satisfied, on gospel-principles, that you may innocently eat of any sort of food that comes in your way, provided *it be received with thanksgiving, and be sanctified by the word of God and prayer*; (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) yet if your Christian brother, though, through Jewish prejudices, he be ever so weak and mistaken in his conscientious scrupulosity, is troubled and offended at your eating it, and you, knowing this, will nevertheless persist in the use of your liberty, and *that* in his presence; you therein do not behave with such tenderness and condescension towards him, as the great law of love requires; but you live and act in direct contradiction to it, as that obliges you to do all you can for your neighbour's good, especially in spiritual and eternal concerns. Let this thought prevail upon you to wave the unseasonable use of your liberty in such circumstances, that you may not stagger the faith*, and wound

NOTE

* Some who understand this passage, verse, it is called *grieving him with meat*; and in ver. 20, 21. it is represented, as doing things, whereby *he stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak, and so destroying the work of God*, in opposition to *following after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*. (ver. 19.) And, if we compare this with the apostle's discourse in a somewhat parallel case, 1 Cor. viii. 8,—13. we may observe, that his argument, about *eating things offered to idols*, turns just in the same manner there, as it doth here, upon misleading and wounding the conscience

16 Let not then
your good be evil
spoken of.

17 For the king-
dom of God is not
meat and drink,
but righteousness,
and peace, and joy
in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that
in these things ser-
veth Christ, is ac-
ceptable to God,
and approved of
men.

wound the conscience of your Christian brother, nor destroy his peace and comfort, or draw him into sin, and so do what has a direct moral tendency, in its own nature, to bring everlasting perdition upon one to whom Christ has shewn such superlative love, as to lay down his own life, which he did as a ransom for the weakest, as well as strongest believers.

16 Take heed then that your liberty, in eating formerly forbidden meats, though it be good and allowable in itself, and in some cases may be justly insisted on, be not exposed to censure and reproach, and stigmatized as mere licentiousness, or made a bone of contention, and an occasion of speaking evil of Christianity itself, through the imprudence, unreasonableness, and mischief of your using it, to the scandalizing of your weaker brethren.

17 For, after all, the nature, glory, and blessedness of the gospel-dispensation, or of that kingdom of grace which God has now erected in the hearts of his people, in order to his training them up for his heavenly kingdom, do not consist of such circumstantial, external, and carnal things, as using or refusing different sorts of meat and drink, according to the settlements made in the *Mosaic* law, which were to be observed only till the time of reformation: (Heb. ix. 10.) No; but it is of a much more excellent, pure, and spiritual constitution, which consists of the righteousness of faith, and true holiness in heart and life; and of a solid peace in our own souls, and a peaceable temper and carriage towards others, under a sense of God's being at peace with us, through the blood of Jesus; and of those supernatural and divine consolations which the Holy Spirit is the author of, as he *abounds abroad the love of God in our hearts, and witnesses with our spirits, that we are the children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* (Chap. v. 5. and viii. 16, 17.)

18 For whatever a man's opinion, and correspondent practice may be, about meats and drinks, and things indifferent, he that, with a due regard to these substantial points of vital religion, behaves as a faithful servant of Christ, in subjection and obedience to him, in a dependence on him, and with a view to his glory, is, both as to his person and services, *(as ever)* well-pleasing to God, in and through the Son of

N O T E.

science of a weak brother: But, even admitting that he had a reference in both these places to *eternal destruction*, his caution may be understood only as levelled against doing what, in the nature of

things, has a tendency to the ruin of soul, for whom Christ died, and who would issue in it, were not the grace of God to prevent the natural effect of his uncharitable behaviour towards him.

his love; and one of such an evangelical spirit and conversation is both (*disciple*) proved to be a sincere Christian, and approved of, as such, in the judgment of all good and wise men of every denomination, whether he observe ceremonial rites or not.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another.

19 Since therefore all ceremonial things are but of trifling account, in comparison with these great importances of Christianity; Let us, instead of laying any stress upon them, or going into uncharitable heats, feuds, and disputes about them, and practices of them, study and pursue such things as, in their own nature and circumstances, tend to cultivate spiritual peace and prosperity in our own souls, and an amicable temper and conduct towards our brethren in Christ; and let it be our great concern and care to propagate such opinions and practices, as may be for the building up, strengthening, and encouraging one another in faith and love, and in the hope and holiness of the gospel.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

20 Take heed that for the sake of so inconsiderable a thing, as eating certain sorts of meat, you do not obstruct and ruin that harmony, love and peace, spiritual edification and comfort, (see the note on *ver.* 15.) which are noble branches of the work of God's Spirit and grace, and which he delights in, and produces by means of, and according to, the great design of the gospel. If any of you are so stiff as to insist, that it is not fit or reasonable for you to abridge yourself of a liberty in this case, which Christ has given you; I grant indeed, as may be seen from what has been already said, (*ver.* 14.) that every kind of food may now be eaten without defilement to the conscience, provided it be done in a lawful manner: And I farther own, that to the true believer in Christ, they are all cleansed from the curse which sin had brought upon earthly enjoyments. But yet it is a plain abuse of Christian liberty, and is very sinful and injurious in that man who has so little love and compassion for a tender spirited brother, as to indulge himself in eating one or another sort of meat, when he knows that his so doing is matter of grief and stumbling to him.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth; or is offended, or is made weak.

21 In such circumstances, it is kind and prudent, commendable and right, well-pleasing to God, and shews an excellent spirit, and is indeed a fulfilling of the great law of love, so far to wave a liberty, which is allowable in itself, as not only to abstain from such meats as were formerly forbidden, but even from any sort of flesh, while other convenient food may be had, and not to drink wine without a necessity for it; no, nor to do any thing whatsoever, that may be avoided without violating some law of God and nature:

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It is morally good, I say, to refrain from all these things, when, by indulging to them, your Christian brother would be hindered, thrown down, and wounded, in his way and walk before God, like one that has a stumbling-block laid before him*; or would be discouraged and troubled, and brought into danger of being prejudiced against the pure unmixed gospel itself, on that account; or would be enfeebled and staggered in his faith and hope, and be tempted to sin, either by rashly condemning others for doing what he takes to be unlawful, or by doing the same thing himself, with a doubting conscience, under the influence of their example.

21 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself, in that thing which he alloweth.

22 Upon the whole then, is one or another among you fully persuaded in your own mind, on the foot of the gospel-revelation, that you may lawfully eat of every kind of food, and are not tied to Jewish ordinances about meats, any more than about days? This persuasion of your Christian liberty is right: Hold it fast †, with respect to yourself, and your own use of it, on all proper occasions, to the glory of God, with a sincere conscience towards him, as in his sight and presence, and as a rule to you, though not to them that are otherwise minded. That Christian is happy indeed, he possesses his own soul in peace, and is acceptable to God, in his conduct; whose own conscience does not reproach and condemn him, but is clearly satisfied, both as to the lawfulness and expediency of what he allows himself to do in every instance, and particularly in this of eating, or not eating what is set before him.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he

23 But on the contrary, he who, in his own opinion, discerns a difference between meats that are lawful and unlawful ‡; nay, he that staggers in his mind

N O T E S.

* Dr. Whitby, in his notes on this verse, and others there referred to, would have it, that the words (*καταδικάζει* *αὐτὸν ὃ ἐν τούτῳ ἐπιτρέχει*) here rendered *stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*, signify to stumble and fall to one's ruin, or to *perish*. But though *sometimes* they may be, they are far from being *always* used in that sense, as appears from *ver. 1, 2. and chap. iv. 19. Matth. iv. 6. and xvi. 31. John xvi. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 29. and xiii. 10. and xiii. 3, 4, 9.* with several other places. See also the note on *ver. 15.*

† To thyself (*κατὰ σκευήν*). The preposition here used, rarely signifies to, but very often concerning, as concerning, as pertaining to, or in respect of, and thus it is rendered, *Rom. i. 3. iv. 1.*

ix. 5. and xi. 23. 2 Cor. xi. 21. Phil. iv. 11. and in several other places. And after this manner it might have been rendered with the greatest propriety and advantage here: For I can scarcely think that the apostle advised Gentile believers to conceal their sentiments about Christian liberty, and keep them entirely to themselves, as according to our translation of this passage, the generality of interpreters have been led to understand it.

‡ The word here used for him that doubts, (*ὁ διστακτικὸς*) is sometimes rendered to discern, or to make a difference, as in *Matth. xvi. 3. and Jude. ver. 22.* and at others to stagger or waver, as in *Rom. iv. 20. and James i. 6.* Both these senses may be taken in here; though

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he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.

mind about eating them, and is doubtful whether it be lawful or not, is condemned in his own conscience, and by the word of God, with relation to what he doth therein, if notwithstanding this persuasion, or these scruples, he ventures to eat of it; the reason is, because he is far from being satisfied that God has given him any warrant for so doing, or that it is not displeasing to him: For, in all matters of a religious nature, whatever we do not believe has a foundation in, and is authorized by, the word of God, is very sinful for us to practise or comply with, as it is a contempt of his authority; a disregard to what we profess to be our only rule of faith and duty; and a violation of those sacred dictates of conscience, which ought to restrain us from every thing that we fear will not be approved of in the day of judgment.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How ready should Christians be to hold communion one with another, notwithstanding little differences between them, like those that relate to ceremonial days and meats which are set aside by the gospel-dispensation, and does not affect the vitals of religion? They should take heed of an uncharitable, disdainful, and censorious spirit; but the sincere believer may comfort himself in this, that God has received him, and is able to make him stand, though others may despise, or judge him. How much better therefore is it to approve ourselves to God and our own consciences, than to be approved of men! For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And O what awful thoughts should we have of the Lord Jesus, as the great God, as well as Judge of all, who has sworn by himself, that every knee shall bow to him; and to whom every one must give an account of himself! And in view of an impartial and decisive judgment to come; how tender and condescending should we be to our brethren, that are apt to be offended on every little occasion for want of better light! It is an high aggravation of guilt to do any thing, that, in its own nature, tends to the discomfort and ruin of the weakest of those for whom Christ died, and to the disconcerting of the work of God in them; since they have as sure an interest in the Redeemer as the strongest saint upon earth. The weak believer should not judge the strong, nor the strong despise the weak; each remembering that what is not of faith is sin: Nor should either of them behave so imprudently as to give occasion for their good to be evil spoken of; but happy is he, who condemns not himself in that which he allows himself to do. How concerned should Christians of all ranks and denominations be, to act upon principles of faith, and a good conscience, in all things, and to promote each others edification and peace! O how excellent are the blessings of Christ's kingdom, which consists, not in external ritual things, like meats and drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And how preferable is his service to all others! It is acceptable to God, and approved of all good men; and, in the performance of this, we are called to live and die, not to ourselves, but to Christ, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve, in consideration of his having died and rose, and now living in heaven, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

CHAP.

NOTE.

though the last seems to be principally intended, as it stands opposed to him that is weak, (ver. 22.) and is the same with him that is weak, in opposition to those that are strong. (Chap. xv. 1.) And the word, *κατακρίνεται* translated damned, properly signifies is condemned, that is, by his own conscience, when he doth what that tells him, or at least suspects, is wrong. But this has

no reference to eternal damnation, any farther than all actions against conscience exposes one to it: And though many serious Christians have raised discouraging scruples to themselves, by applying this passage to the Lord's supper, it is undeniably plain that it has no relation to that ordinance, but only to eating such meats as the apostle had all along before been discoursing about.

C H A P. XV.

The apostle gives directions to stronger believers how to behave toward the weak, 1,—6. And to all of them to receive one another as brethren, 7,—12. And draws to a conclusion of the main body of his epistle, 13,—33.

TEXT.

WE then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

PARAPHRASE.

FROM what has been said, in the foregoing discourse, about the charitable and cautious use of Christian liberty, relating to Jewish meats and days, it plainly follows, that those of us who, like the believing Gentiles, are established in the faith of the gospel, with respect to the whole of that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and who have arrived to any considerable measures of knowledge and grace, are bound in duty to have a compassionate and tender regard to our Christian brethren, whose faith is staggering, and whose judgment and other spiritual attainments are but small. We should be meek, forbearing, and patient toward them, and should make kind allowances for, and endeavour to relieve them under, their prejudices, doubts, and fears, rash censures, and conscientious scruples, which, like those that are found in some Jewish converts, proceed merely from honest, though misguided zeal, and want of better light. And as we ought not to live to ourselves; (*chap. xiv. 7.*) so it by no means becomes us to aim only at gratifying our own inclinations, much less to indulge our own humour, pride, and passions, and contemptuous thoughts of others; nor ought we to resolve upon having our own way and will in every thing, that we apprehend to be barely in itself lawful, though offensive and injurious to the tender minds of others.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

2 Let each of us therefore study and labour, and beg of God to enable us, to behave in the most condescending, engaging manner towards our fellow-Christian, who, notwithstanding his weaknesses, is undoubtedly to be deemed our neighbour, that ought to be loved as ourselves; let us yield, as far as lawfully may be, to make him easy, and endeavour to soften his temper, and gently to instruct and win upon him, with a view to what is, by way of eminency, good, (*us to ayadon*) that his soul may grow in grace and knowledge, comfort and holiness, to complete salvation; and that the whole church may be edified in love, to the glory of God.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself;

3 For our great and blessed Lord himself, who was under no obligation to any of us, nor had the least

self; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.

need of us, did not indulge his own ease or pleasure, nor seek his own safety or honour, to the neglect of others, when he was here upon earth; but he waved all gratifications of nature, condescended and denied himself in numberless instances, and freely submitted to all manner of hardships, sufferings, and disgrace for our sakes, and for his Father's glory, according to what is recorded, *Psal. lxi. 9.* and was most eminently fulfilled in him*, whom *David*, his type, personated, as saying to God his Father, The reproaches, that were cast on thy name, by those that spoke evil of, and vented their rage against, the methods of thy providence and grace, sensibly pierced my heart with grief; yea, those reproaches fell with all manner of indignity and cruelty upon me, and I willingly sustained them for thy glory, while I endured the cross, despising the shame, and endured the contradiction of sinners against myself: (*Heb. xii. 2, 3.*) † And the transgressions of thy people, whereby they have highly dishonoured and affronted thee, were, in a judicial manner, laid upon me, that I might be smitten and wounded for them; (*Isa. liii. 5, 6, 8.*) and I bore the punishment, due to them, in mine own body on the tree, when I suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that I might bring them to God. (*1 Pet. ii. 24. and iii. 18.*)

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.

4 We are not to suppose that this ancient passage, though primarily meant of *David* himself, had no reference to our Lord; or that it is of no use to teach us the duty of bearing with the infirmities, and ill treatment of others, and denying ourselves for their good: For this, and all things else, in general, that stand on record in the Old Testament, were written, by inspiration of God, so long ago, for our instruction and practical improvement, that by means of the types, prophecies, histories, and examples, as well as every other part of those sacred writings, we might be excited and animated to the exercise of long-suffering, patience, and forbearance, under all our trials, provocations, and reproaches; and might be made partakers of those divine consolations, which consist in the joys of faith, the peace of a good conscience, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, to relieve and encourage

4 E 2 NOTES.

* As the last clause of *Psal. lxi. 9.* is here applied to Christ, so is the former part of that verse in *John ii. 17.*; and ver. 21. of that *Psal.* is said to be fulfilled in him, *John xix. 28, 29.*

† The reproaches of them that reproached thee, may refer either to the opprobrious and blasphemous speeches of

the wicked, that reflect upon God, and upon his dispensations, such as the Jews went into in their reviling his Son, as if he, whom God had sent, were an impostor; or it may signify the dishonour that all sin, in its own nature, brings upon God, as it is a reproach to his name and image, law and government.

courage us under all the difficulties of this imperfect state, and to raise and confirm a well-grounded hope of all needful assistance and support under them, and of eternal glory to crown them.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus;

5 But as an effectual improvement of the holy Scriptures, and of every consideration whatsoever, to these noble purposes, depends on gracious influences from above, may that God, who exercises all long-suffering and forbearance towards us, and comforts them that are cast down; and who is the author, fountain, and giver of all Christian patience, and of all the spiritual consolation, that we either have in ourselves, or are the instruments of promoting in others; may this Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, give you an harmonious, tender, and peaceable disposition towards each other, that whether ye be united in sentiments, or not, as to lesser matters, ye may nevertheless be intirely so, as affectionate brethren, in heart and design, with regard to these and all other doctrines and duties, that belong to your Christian state and character, according to the example, will, and commandment of the anointed Saviour; and according to the truth, as it is in Jesus; and as may be most for his glory, and acceptable to God through him.

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6 My heart's desire and prayer, on your behalf, is for all this, (100) to the end that, with united hearts and voices, as though ye were all animated by one soul, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, ye may cordially agree and concur, in your religious assemblies, in common conversation, and in spirit, temper, and behaviour, to shew forth the praises of God; and may ascribe the honours to him, that are his due; even to the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the center of all our union and communion with God, and with one another.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

7 Notwithstanding therefore the different opinions, that may be among you about matters of little importance, see to it, that there be no breach of charity between you, but that ye receive one another into your brotherly affection, friendly converses, and holy communion; and let the endearing example of our great Lord and Saviour himself influence you hereunto. As he, in his wonderful condescension and grace, bears with our infirmities, and has visibly taken all of us, who credibly profess his name; and has actually and effectually received every one of us, who are true believers, into his favour and family, and into the nearest union and communion with himself, whether we be weaker or stronger believers, of Jewish or Gentile extract; and as he has done this, that God might

be glorified in the manifestation of his truth to the *Jews*, and of his mercy to the *Gentiles*, (ver. 8, 9.) and that both might glorify him, and be brought to his eternal kingdom and glory: Even so do ye cordially embrace one another, as brethren, without distinction of nations, or parties, that ye may glorify God by your harmony and peace, and by walking together in faith and love, and in the fellowship of the gospel, till ye arrive at all possible perfection in his glorious presence for ever.

8 Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

8 Now, to shew how Christ has admitted both *Jewish* and *Gentile* believers to equal privileges and blessings, without distinction, under the gospel-state, I would, in the first place, observe, on behalf of the *Jews*, to take off prejudices from *Gentile* converts against them; that Jesus, the Messiah, took upon him the form of a servant, and appeared under that character, in a special manner, to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*; and that he was circumcised, came under their law, and personally ministered to them, for displaying the glory of God's truth and faithfulness, by what he taught, did, and suffered, to ratify, establish, and give efficacy to those promises of the covenant of grace, which were made to the patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob**, and of which circumcision was the visible sign and seal; that they might be primarily fulfilled to the spiritual seed, which should be raised up from among their natural offspring; and then to all others, of what nation soever, that should be the children of *Abraham*, by faith in Christ Jesus. (*Chap.* iv. 16, 17, 18. and *Gal.* iii. 7, 8, 9, 28, 29.) And therefore *Gentile* believers ought, by all means, to shew the greatest tenderness and love to those of the circumcision, since they are only grafted in among them, to partake of the privileges of the covenant together with them. (*Chap.* xi. 17.)

9 And that the *Gentiles* might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess

9 And, to engage the brotherly regards of *Jewish* converts to the believing *Gentiles*, I would observe that, according to the tenor of the covenant, and the most extensive meaning of those promises, which Christ confirmed, salvation is now come to the *Gentiles*; that they,

N O T E.

* Christ's being styled a minister of circumcision, with respect to his confirming the promises made to the fathers, naturally suggests, that he has confirmed the covenant of promises which circumcision was the sign and seal of, and that this covenant had a relation to spiritual benefits, as included in the promises, that God would be a God to Abraham and his seed in their generations; (*Gen.* xvii. 7.) and that in his seed all the na-

tions of the earth should be blessed, (*Gen.* xii. 3. and xviii. 18. and xxii. 18. which was repeated to *Isaac*, chap. xxvi. 4. and to *Jacob*, chap. xxviii. 14. (See *Dr. Owen's* volume of sermons printed for *Clark*, p. 577, 578.) And these I take to have been the two grand promises of the covenant of grace, under that dispensation, which had circumcision for its initiating sign and seal.

sefs to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

And again he

saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles with his

people.

And again,

Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and

laud him, all ye

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And again,

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they, who, for many ages past, were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, (Eph. ii. 12.) might have occasion, and hearts given them to magnify and shew forth the praises of God, on account of the exceeding greatness of his sovereign, free, and tender mercy toward them, in, at length, looking with an eye of pity upon them, under all their deplorable circumstances of sin and misery, and bringing them into a state of acceptance with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus. And this is no more, than was foretold in ancient prophecies; as for instance, what Christ, personated by *David*, his type, is introduced as saying to his Father, is written (*Psal.* xviii. 49.) to the following purport *, Because, in the exaltation and enlargement of my kingdom, thou hast constituted me Head over heathen nations, and brought multitudes of them into a willing subjection to the sceptre of my grace, I will publish thy praises, and extol thee among the *Gentiles*, that shall be converted to thee; and I will advance the honours of thy name, by declaring it to them, and by animating them to offer thanksgivings to thee, for thy wonderful mercy toward them. (See *Psal.* xxii. 22.)

10 And in another prophecy, applicable to gospel-times, which was exhibited in the song of *Moses*, (Deut. xxxii. 43.) the Spirit of God, who inspired the sacred writers, and carried his view to the enlargement of the Messiah's church and kingdom, says to this effect, Delight yourselves abundantly, and be exceeding glad, O ye *Gentile* nations, together with his people *Israel*, under a grateful sense of the surprising mercy and free favour, that is shewn to you, in making you one spiritual body with them, and taking you into all their privileges and blessings.

11 Again, in another prophetic passage it is said, (*Psal.* cxvii. 1.) Bless and magnify the Lord, and make his name glorious, in ascriptions of divine honours to him, for his great mercy to you, O all ye people of the earth, whether consisting of *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that are called by his grace.

12 Once

N O T E.

* For this cause, or, as it is in *Psal.* xviii. 49. Therefore will I give thanks, or confess unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, has a manifest reference to the verses which went before in that *Psal.* and which, as appears from the application of this verse to Christ, are likewise ultimately to be understood of him; where, among other things, he is brought in as saying, (ver. 43. 44. 47.) Thou hast made me the head of the heathen, then; a people whom I have not known shall serve me; as soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me; strangers shall submit themselves to me; it is God that avenges me, and subdues the people under me: And so the connection stands with great propriety, Therefore, or for this cause, will I give thanks, or confess to thee, among the heathen, or the *Gentiles*.

11 And again Elias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

12 Once more, to wind up this argument with another famous testimony, which is still more obvious and express, the prophet *Isaiah* (chap. xi. 10.) says, with a special reference to the time of Christ's appearing upon earth; In that day the Messiah, who, like a noble branch, shall spring from *Jesse** through *David's* loins, shall sustain and invigorate his own family, and the whole church of God, and make them fruitful, as the root doth a tree and all its branches: And this divine Saviour, who, according to the flesh, shall arise in that family, at a time, when it shall be in as obscure a state, as in the days of *Jesse*, before it was ennobled with regal dignity; and who shall rise from the dead, and be advanced to his throne, that he may reign by the power of his word and Spirit over *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*; to him shall the ends of the earth, even *Gentile*-sinners, seek and look by faith, that they may be saved; and in him shall they be brought to place their dependence and hope for a whole salvation. All these testimonies, put together, evidently shew, that there was to be a time, when the *Gentiles* should be fellow-heirs with the *Jews*, and the middle-wall of partition between them should be taken down, as it is at this day: And therefore the *Jewish* converts ought to receive *Gentile* believers, with all readiness of mind, as their brethren in Christ.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

13 Now, laying aside every distinction of parties, my most affectionate prayer for you all is, that the blessed God, in whom is my entire trust and confidence, and who in Christ is the object, ground, and author of all the hope, which *Gentiles*, as well as others, have of spiritual and eternal blessings, may plentifully enrich, and satiate you with all sorts of divine consolation

NOTE

* *There shall be a root*, or rather the root (*שֹׁרֶשׁ*) of *Jesse*, is a phrase so very singular and emphatical, as seems to be applicable with no propriety to any but the Messiah: For of the very person, of whom this is affirmed, *Isa. xi. 10.* whence this passage is quoted, it is said in the first verse of that chapter, *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root.* These compared together, intimate that he, who in his human nature sprang from *Jesse*, the father of *David*, is in his divine nature, and mediatorial office, the root, life, and strength of the family; and so, in different views of him, is both *the root* and *the spring* of *David*, as he is styled, *Rev. ii. 16.* The remaining part of this citation is exactly in the words of the

Seventy, correspondent to the sense of the Hebrew text, which runs thus, *In that day there shall be the root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek.* Christ's standing for an ensign, banner, or standard of the people, is emblematical of their lifting under him, as their Lord and sovereign, and of his reigning over them; and the *Gentiles seeking to him*, is supposed to be in a way of hope and trust in him: So that the sense is much the same; and the apostle's speaking of Christ, as the object of the *Gentiles* faith or trust, supposes him to be a divine person; and so doth his representing the supernatural and saving effects of his own ministry, as what *Christ wrought by him.* (ver. 16.)

consolation and rapturous joys; and with all abiding, solid, and evangelical peace, to the utmost degree, in your own souls, and with one another, as the result of lively exercises of faith on an unseen Jesus, and on the promises of the everlasting covenant, and of realizing views of invisible glory; that ye may not only have good hope, through grace, of future blessedness, but even a full assurance of it, and the most settled establishment and humble confidence in believing, to the suppressing of all doubts and fears, through the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, by his enlightening your minds, strengthening your hearts, witnessing with your spirits, that ye are the children of God, and giving you the earnest of the eternal inheritance*.

14. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

14. And as this is my fervent prayer for you; so I myself, judging of you upon the foot of moral evidence, am well satisfied concerning you, my dear brethren in the Lord, that ye are endued with such benevolent graces of the Spirit of love and peace, as dispose you to mutual kindness in your temper and behaviour one towards another, as fellow-Christians, notwithstanding the little differences of sentiment and external circumstances between you; and I am persuaded that ye are abundantly replenished with the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, and that to such a degree, as to be capable of instructing each other in the most important points of the gospel, and of quickening and exciting one another, with relation to every thing that is good, and particularly to your duty in cultivating a cordial friendship among yourselves, as becomes those, that are agreed in the fundamental articles of the Christian faith.

15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

15. But notwithstanding your excellent qualifications, and the good opinion I have of you, who are exceeding dear to me as brethren, I have taken the liberty of writing with the greater freedom and plainness in some things to you, especially to the Gentile-part among you, (see the note on 2 Cor. ii. 5.) with reference to your Christian liberty, and obligations, and your equal share with the believing Jews in the blessings of the gospel, as designing to be your remembrancer in those particulars, which ye indeed already know; but, considering the imperfection of

N O T E.

* *The power of the Holy Ghost here, and the power of the Spirit of God, ver. 19. make a plain distinction between the Holy Spirit himself, and the power which he exerts, and shew that he is a divine person: (See my sermons on this*

text, p. 49. 50. 51.) And as, in these passages, things peculiar to God are said to be performed by the power of his Spirit, or of the Holy Ghost, it is manifest that the power, which the Holy Spirit exerts, is no less than the power of God

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this present state, ye may need to be reminded of, both for your caution, quickening, and consolation : And this I have been emboldened, and thought it my duty to do, because of the apostolic authority, with the endowments answerable to it, that is conferred upon me by the free and sovereign favour of God, who disposes of his gifts, graces, and benefits to whom he pleases, and who has bestowed this honour upon me.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

16 That I might be the servant of Jesus Christ, sent forth with his commission, to proclaim his name, and to publish, propose, and recommend his unsearchable riches, especially among the *Gentiles*; (Acts ix. 15. and Eph. iii. 8.) officiating (*υπουργεῖν*) with assiduity, labour, and zeal, in holy ministrations of that gospel, which is of divine original *, (as) to the end that heathens themselves, being converted by this means, might be devoted as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God; (*chap. xii. 1.* compared with *Isa. lxvi. 20.*) and that their spiritual offerings of prayer, thanksgiving, and praise, and of charitable benevolence, might be presented to him, as an odour of a sweet smell, (*Phil. iv. 18.*) with acceptance through Jesus Christ, (*1 Pet. ii. 5.*) far beyond all the oblations, that were ever made at the temple; they and their services being purified and consecrated to God, not by legal libations, but by an effusion of the gifts, graces, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.

17 This therefore being the office to which I am especially appointed, and my discharge of it having been so remarkably blessed; I have great matter of rejoicing and glorying, not indeed in myself, who am nothing, but in and through Jesus Christ, *who is ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things*; (*Eph. iv. 10.*) and by whose grace it is, that I have so abundantly and successfully laboured in preaching the gospel, and bringing multitudes of *Gentile-sinners* to the faith of Christ, (*1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.*) that they, like the offerings under the law, may be, as dedicated things, to the praise and glory of God.

18 For,

N O T E.

* Here, as is observed by several commentators, is a plain allusion to the Jewish priests officiating at the altar, and to the sacrifices which they offered with such libations as were appointed to be poured upon them, that they might be acceptable to God: Accordingly the apostle speaks of himself as *ministering* like the priests of old; but the sacrifice

he offered to God was not that of slain beasts, but of men made (spiritually) alive, even of the *Gentiles*, that were turned from idols to serve the living and true God; and as all legal offerings were purified, so this was sanctified by the Holy Ghost, as an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations. (*Isa. lxvi. 20.*)

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of these things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

18 For, in this my humble and holy boasting, I will not; no, I in conscience dare not, allow myself the liberty of mentioning any thing, that is not strictly true, or of assuming the least honour to myself, as if it were done by any wisdom or power of mine own; but shall only take notice of those wonderful effects, which have been actually wrought, and which Christ himself is the author of, and has performed, by the instrumentality of my ministrations, to bring the Gentiles to the obedience of faith; which is manifested in their publicly avowing Christ, as their Lord and Saviour, in their speaking of him as such, and living suitable to their holy profession of his name*; and which is brought to pass, by means of my preaching and conversation, labours and sufferings for him.

19 These visible tokens of divine authority and assistance, that attend me, are still further sealed and attested by the power, (*ἡ δύναμις*) that is exerted in producing signal miracles and wonderful works, which lie beyond the reach of all operation in the ordinary course of nature; but are wrought (*ἡ δύναμις*) by the immediate power of God's own Spirit, who comes from the exalted head and Saviour to perform them, and renders all these means effectual by an internal illumination, and impressive energy in the hearts of them that believe, whereby they are persuaded, and brought over to receive the gospel, not as the word of man; but, as it is in truth, the word of God, and to turn from idols to serve the living and true God: (1 Thess. i. 9. and ii. 13.) So that in this manner, under the agency of the blessed Spirit, I have been enabled to publish the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and to fulfil the ministry, which I received from him, in the whole compass of it, with great freedom, enlargement, and success; not shunning to declare any part of the counsel of God; but spreading the favour of the knowledge of Christ in all places, where I travelled, from Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, for a great many hundreds of miles, in numerous towns and cities, through the regions of Syria, Asia the Less, and Greece, till I came to † Illyricum in Europe.

20 And

N O T E.

* By word and deed may relate either to the obedience of the Gentiles, or to what was done by the apostle, for bringing them to it; and I have given such a sense of the words in the last of these views, as is entirely distinct from what follows in the former part of the next verse, and as, together with that, makes a beautiful gradation, in account-

ing for the conversion of the Gentiles.

† Illyricum is a great country in Europe, between Panonia on the north and the Adriatic sea, now called the gulph of Venice, on the south; and is mostly comprehended under the name of Slavonia or Dalmatia, bordering upon Hungary. (See Collier's dictionary.) And we have an account of the apostle's

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.

20 And (καί) in my fervent zeal for the glory of God, the interest of a dear Redeemer, and the salvation of perishing sinners, it has been my holy ambition (*ὡς φιλοτιμύμενος*) and chief aim, in this vast circuit of labour, under the divine assistance before-mentioned, to preach the gospel of the grace of God among such people as were entire strangers to it, and had never so much as heard of Christ, much less been converted to him, by any means whatsoever before: I was desirous of this honour, lest, if I had gone to places, where other apostles, evangelists, or ministering servants had paved the way, I should have been thought to have taken my light from them, and only built upon principles which they had laid down, and to have only carried on the good work which they had begun; and so should have failed of one grand proof of my apostleship and doctrine, as received immediately from Christ himself.

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard, shall understand.

21 But my ministrations have been mostly among the *Gentiles*, and for some time past among the blindest, and the most idolatrous and miserable of them, according to that ancient prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom, *Isa. lii. 15.* where it is written, with a peculiar reference to the calling of other nations besides the *Jews*, The people that were ignorant of Christ, and to whom he never had been preached, shall see, in the glorious light of the gospel, attended with the power of the Spirit, such things as are new and strange, and of the highest importance; things which none of the philosophers, or oracles of the heathen, could ever tell them; and things which exceed all that ever had been revealed under any foregoing dispensation: And they who have never heard any thing about Christ, and the blessings purchased and brought in by him, shall consider and understand, so as to be brought to the saving knowledge of him.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

22 And (καί) these my necessary, and important engagements, in continually travelling and preaching about, to plant the gospel, as Providence called me from place to place, in various distant countries, has hitherto unavoidably prevented my coming to see you; my times, work, and ways, being all in God's hands, at his direction and disposal, and it being my duty to wave an indulgence to my own private inclinations, purposes, and pleasure, for the sake of promoting the kingdom and glory of Christ among the poor heathens, that were perishing in their sins, darkness, and idolatry.

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23 But

N O T E.

prodigious travels, labours, and success in many of these parts, *Act. xiii.* and several following chapters.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

23 But as now, through the powerful operations of the Spirit and grace of God, (*ver.* 19.) the gospel is planted, and churches are gathered and settled, (*Acts* xiv. 21, 22, 23.) in all these regions; (*καὶ ἐκείναι τῆς γῆς*) so that there is no more room or opportunity, for me to be any further employed in that sort of service here; and as I have been exceedingly desirous, for many years past, were it the will of God, to take a tour to *Rome*, not to gratify my curiosity in seeing the rarities, antiquities, and grandeur of that magnificent metropolis, and seat of the empire, or in conversing with the great and learned men there; but that I might impart some spiritual gift to you, for your edification and establishment, and we might be comforted together, by our mutual faith. (*Chap.* i. 11, 12.)

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

24 As the Lord, I say, seems to have done his work by me, for which he called me into these parts, I purpose, by his will, to attempt a propagation of the knowledge of Christ in *Spain*, my heart being greatly bent on still further spreading his glory among those that are utter strangers to him; and whenever he may favour me with an opportunity of setting out for that country, which is over-run with heathenism and idolatry, I design to give myself the pleasure of making you a visit by the way*: For, according to present appearances, I hope, that, by his good providence, I shall be capable of seeing you in that intended journey; and I have such confidence in your affection, and especially in the care and kindness of my God, that I humbly trust ye will be disposed, according to the custom of other churches, (*Acts* xvii. 15.) to assist me in such a manner, as may be needful for my safe conduct; and for accommodating me with proper conveniences in my travels from you to *Spain*: This I hope for, after I shall have had the satisfaction of spending some time in personal conversation with Christians of your excellent character, and of being refreshed with your company, by hearing and seeing what God has done for you. I promise myself a great deal of pleasure in this; and yet I call it my being filled or satisfied but *in part*, (*κατὰ μέρος*) because it is possible, that I may not find equal satisfaction

N O T E

* The apostle designed all this; but as many purposes of that nature were only according to present probable views of what might be best for serving the interest of Christ, and the good of souls, and were not always formed under divine suggestion; God, who sends his servants wherever he pleases, often called him to

other employment, and so prevented the execution of his own schemes, sometimes by the opposition of adversaries, or some unexpected turns of providence; and at others, by immediate revelation, as in *Acts* xvi. 6.—10. and xviii. 5.—11. And whether he ever went to *Spain*, or not, is very uncertain.

tion in every one of you, (see the note on chap. xi. 25.) and I shall not be able to enjoy your good company so long as I should be glad of; and because the best society, that the saints can have together on earth, falls vastly short of the communion which they have with Christ; and much more of that, which they will have, with still greater freedom, fulness, and duration, both with him, and one another in heaven.

25 But now I go *unto Jerusalem*, to minister unto the saints. But, for the present, I am engaged in a very necessary affair of another nature; being bound for *Jerusalem*, whither I am going, charged with the service of assisting in the distribution of some charitable contributions, that have been generously made by several *Gentile* churches, under my direction, for the relief of the poor Christians there; (1 *Cor.* xvi. 1,—4. and 2 *Epi.* ix. 1,—5.) which are a body of holy professors of Christ, devoted to God, sanctified by his Spirit, and distinguished from the rest of the world, by the purity of their hearts and lives; while many of them, through violent persecutions and a famine, (*Acts* xi. 27,—30.) are reduced to extreme necessity.

26 For it hath pleased them of *Macedonia*, and *Achaia*, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at *Jerusalem*. 26 For the *Gentile* believers, (*ver.* 27.) in the *Grecian* provinces of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, among whom I have been travelling and preaching for some years past, have, from their benevolent spirit, cheerfully joined together, and made a general collection for the use of the religious poor at *Jerusalem*, that they might testify their love particularly toward them, and their readiness to hold communion in all good things with them, notwithstanding their distance of place, and difference of nation, and of sentiments, about some points of little consequence.

27 It hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are. For if the *Gentiles* have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 27 They have done this, I say *, not grudgingly or of necessity, like persons over-pressed, or under a force; but with the greatest freedom, liberality, and delight, like people, forward, of their own accord, to excite one another by their own example; an example worthy the imitation of all that hear of it. And this is indeed no more than what, on the foot of gratitude, as well as of common benevolence, may be deemed an equitable debt, which the *Grecian* churches owe to those of *Judea*: For since, according to the disposals of God's providence and grace, they, who

N O T E.

* The apostle brought this over again with such an emphasis, not only for their honour, and to shew with what satisfaction he reflected on the readiness and measure which they discovered in their generous contributions; but to impress thought, with the most genteel insinuation and address, on the minds of the church at *Rome*, and particularly of the *Gentile* part among them, to excite them to follow this noble example; and to recommend a cheerful liberality to all other Christians, on every proper occasion, according to their ability.

who were sinners of the *Gentiles*, have received the gospel, which at first came from *Jerusalem*, and was preached to them by apostles sent forth from among the *Jews*; and since, by this means, the *Gentile* converts have been brought to the knowledge of that Saviour who was peculiarly promised and sent to the natural seed of *Abraham*, and was born and raised up among them; and are now made partakers of the spiritual privileges and blessings, which for many ages were confined to the church of *Israel*; since, I say, the *Gentiles* are now, in this manner, become equal sharers with *Jewish* believers in all spiritual and eternal benefits, and that at the expence of the rejection of the body of that people, through their own unbelief, (*chap.* xi. 11, 12, 28, 30.) It is highly fit and reasonable, and the least return that can be made to them, that they, who received so much mercy, through them, for the salvation of their souls, should (to allude to persons that are bound (*λυτρωσιν*) to minister to God in sacred things) conscientiously, cheerfully, and thankfully honour him with their temporal substance, by communicating to their necessities for the support and refreshment of their bodies.

25 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

28 As soon therefore as I have finished the journey and service, in which I am now engaged, and have safely delivered the charitable contributions of the *Gentile* churches; which are the fruit of their faith and love, well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ; and fruit which will abound to their own spiritual account, (*Phil.* iv. 17.) and to the advancement of the interest and glory of our blessed Lord, as well as to the seasonable relief of the poor saints at *Jerusalem*; and which I shall take as much care of, that it be not diminished, embezzled, or applied to any other use, as if it were a treasure sealed up in a bag, till opened for distribution. I then purpose, God sparing life, and giving opportunity, to take you in the way of my fore-mentioned journey into *Spain*. (See the note on *ver.* 24.)

29 And if Providence shall enable me to bring my present design to pass, I am fully satisfied, from Christ's promise of being always with his servants; (*Matth.* xxviii. 20.) from the large experience I have already had of his powerful workings by me; (*ver.* 18.) and from what I hear of his grace bestowed on you, (*chap.* i. 8. and xvi. 19.) that, when I may make you a visit, I shall come, like a vessel richly fraught, under the plentiful anointings of the Holy Ghost, and with great liberty of spirit, in declaring to you the whole counsel of God, and particularly in further explaining, enlarging upon, and establishing

you in all the great doctrines of this epistle; and shall be the means of communicating to you such an abundance of gifts, graces, and consolations, as make up the utmost fulness of spiritual blessings, that are promised and conveyed, under divine influence, by the glorious gospel, of which Christ is the author, and principal subject, and which he has ordered to be preached to all nations, for the obedience of faith. (Chap. xvi. 26.)

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me:

30 Now, my beloved, Christian brethren, in order to the accomplishing of all these desirable designs, I earnestly entreat you, by all the obligations and endearments of the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he has in his heart, has demonstrated in his death, and has manifested and communicated, in distinguishing effects, to you; and by all the love, which ye, in return, have, or ought to have, to his divine and glorious person, and to his cause and interest: And I beseech you, by all the love and grace of the blessed Spirit, in his coming to work effectually, and take up his abode in you*; and by all that excellent grace of love, which he has wrought in you toward God, and Christ, and one another, and toward me, and all his servants and people; and by all the love, which ye bear, and profess to have, particularly to the Holy Spirit himself, and to the triumphs of his power and grace in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification, comfort, and establishment of the saints, and particularly of your own souls; I beg of you, that, as ever ye would act up to these solemn and endearing considerations of Christ and his Spirit, ye would give me a fellowship in all your addresses to God, as I do you in mine; (*chap. i. 9, 10.*) joining your fervent prayers with my own, and wrestling mightily, like persons in good earnest, together with me, in your believing, importunate, and persevering supplications for my guidance and protection, and for the special presence and blessing of God with me.

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe

31 And particularly pray for me, that by an overruling Providence, in my present journey to Jerusalem, (*ver. 25.*) I may escape the snares, and be preserved

N O T E.

* The love of the Spirit may signify either the love that is *subjectively* in him; or the love that he is the *author* of, and works in us; or the love that is *carried out* to him, as its object. It is difficult to say which of these is most precisely the apostle's meaning; they all fit the turn of the phrase, and the design of his argument, to engage the prayers of the believing Romans for him;

and we may well enough suppose, that he took in every consideration of the love of the Spirit, that was proper to strengthen his vehement obtestation for their prayers.—The Holy Ghost may be called, by way of eminence and peculiarity, *the Spirit*, as personally distinguished from the Father and Son; and as properly divine, and infinitely superior to all created spirits.

believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints:

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

34 I beseech you brethren, my prayers, that when I may, by the will of God, arrive at Jerusalem, with the charitable contributions of the Grecian churches, (ver. 25, 26.) this noble service, which is so beneficial, brotherly, and well designed by them and me, may not be rejected or despised, through unhappy prejudices; but may be kindly and affectionately received by the believing Jews, who, though upright honest souls, are too zealous for the rites of the Mosaic law; too cool towards, and jealous of, the converts from other nations; and too much incensed against me, by means of false and invidious reports, as if I had absolutely forbid those believing Jews, that live among the Gentiles, to circumcise their children, or to observe any ancient customs of their fathers. (Acts xxi. 20, 21.)

35 One great motive of my desiring, which should make you the more fervent in offering up your prayers for these appearances of God on my behalf is, that, being thus prospered in my present way and work, I may be at liberty, God willing, to prosecute my intended journey to you, and may have an opportunity of seeing you with the greater satisfaction and joy to us all; and that I may take some rest with you after my fatigues, (ἀναπαύσας μου) and be comforted in the enjoyment of your good company, and in our conferring together about the faith, which God has wrought in us severally, (chap. i. 12.) and about his gracious answers to our prayers.

36 In the mean while, as the best return I can make for what I have been asking of you, my most ardent wishes and prayers for every one of you are, that, as God is reconciled to us, and at peace with us, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and is the fountain and author of all desirable prosperity; and as he delights in his peoples possessing their own souls in patience and peace, and living together in harmony and love; so he, according to this his encouraging and endearing character, would be graciously

served from the malicious designs, and violent outrage and persecutions (ἀκράτεια) of the unbelieving, disobedient, and refractory Jews there; who, being a set of unreasonable and wicked men, (2 Thess. iii. 2.) are my inveterate enemies, and seek to destroy me, (Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. compared with xxi. 28, 31.) merely for my fidelity and zeal in preaching the pure doctrine of justification alone through faith in Christ, without the deeds of the law; and in strenuously maintaining, that this, and all the other privileges and blessings of the gospel, lie as open to the Gentiles as to themselves, (chap. iii. 28, 29, 30.) and I earnestly entreat your prayers, that when I may, by the will of God, arrive at Jerusalem, with the charitable contributions of the Grecian churches, (ver. 25, 26.) this noble service, which is so beneficial, brotherly, and well designed by them and me, may not be rejected or despised, through unhappy prejudices; but may be kindly and affectionately received by the believing Jews, who, though upright honest souls, are too zealous for the rites of the Mosaic law; too cool towards, and jealous of, the converts from other nations; and too much incensed against me, by means of false and invidious reports, as if I had absolutely forbid those believing Jews, that live among the Gentiles, to circumcise their children, or to observe any ancient customs of their fathers. (Acts xxi. 20, 21.)

37 One great motive of my desiring, which should make you the more fervent in offering up your prayers for these appearances of God on my behalf is, that, being thus prospered in my present way and work, I may be at liberty, God willing, to prosecute my intended journey to you, and may have an opportunity of seeing you with the greater satisfaction and joy to us all; and that I may take some rest with you after my fatigues, (ἀναπαύσας μου) and be comforted in the enjoyment of your good company, and in our conferring together about the faith, which God has wrought in us severally, (chap. i. 12.) and about his gracious answers to our prayers.

38 In the mean while, as the best return I can make for what I have been asking of you, my most ardent wishes and prayers for every one of you are, that, as God is reconciled to us, and at peace with us, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and is the fountain and author of all desirable prosperity; and as he delights in his peoples possessing their own souls in patience and peace, and living together in harmony and love; so he, according to this his encouraging and endearing character, would be graciously

ciously present with you, by the special influences of his Spirit, to unite all your hearts in brotherly affection one towards another, that there may be no party-temper, jars, or discords, among you; and that he would bless every one of you, with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and with whatever else he sees needful and best for you, relating to this world, as well as that which is to come. Thus may it be! thus I humbly trust it will be, in testimony of which I heartily say, *Amen.*

RECollections.

With what tenderness and self-denial should we behave towards our brethren in Christ! We should bear with the infirmities of the weak; study to please every one for his edification; receive into our affection and communion all that Christ has received to the glory of God; and unite in glorifying him, as with one heart and voice. What a noble pattern has our Lord set us of this excellent spirit, in denying himself; in the reproaches he sustained for his Father's honour, and the good of his church; and in his condescending to act the part of a minister, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, that the *Gentiles* might glorify God, rejoice in him, and praise him, for making them equal heirs of all privileges and blessings with the *Jews*. What a rich treasure have we in the holy scriptures, which were written for our instruction and comfort, patience and hope! And how should we strive together in prayer, that the God of patience and consolation would enable us to make such use of them, according to the mind of Christ, as may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, and cause us to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost! Blessed be God for his mercy to us, *Gentile*-sinners! We, by the gospel-dispensation, are brought under the Messiah's reign; and he is proposed as an object of faith to us, who were utter strangers to him before, that we might trust in him; and that *Gentile*-believers, and their services, might be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, as a pure offering, which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And, O what an honour doth our great Lord confer upon his servants! He puts them into the ministry of the gospel; and makes them his instruments for the conversion of sinners, and for further helping them that have believed through grace. Be our attainments ever so great in all knowledge and goodness, so as to be capable of admonishing others; yet the ministry is Christ's ordinance, and we need it, for reviving, impressing, and improving what we already know and enjoy. And, O how delightful and advantageous is it, to have the gospel with the fulness of its blessings! And what a wide and glorious spread doth it take; and what wonderful happy effects doth it produce, when attended with the Power of the Spirit, which resides in him, as a divine person, and is exerted by him! This gives the servants of Christ great occasion of glorying in the Lord: They ascribe all honour to him, and would take none to themselves; nor would they boast of any thing that he has not wrought by them; nor invade the province of their brethren: They are desirous to go and work wheresoever God calls them; and they submit all their own purposes, and motions for his service, to his will; they cheerfully encourage all sorts of benevolence, by the love of Christ and of his Spirit; they take pleasure in conversing with fellow-Christians, and recommend themselves, and all their labours, to their prayers; and they pour out their own hearts to God, with fervent desire, that love and unity may abound among them, and that the God of peace may be with them. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVI.

The apostle recommends Phebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, to the church at Rome, 1, 2. Greets several of his friends there by name, 3,—16. Cautions the church against such, as fomented divisions among them, 17,—20. Mentions various persons that joined in Christian salutations with him, 21,—24. And concludes the epistle with an ascription of glory to God, for extending the gospel-revelation, with all its blessings, to Gentiles, as well as Jews, 25,—27.

TEXT.

I COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

PARAPHRASE.

HAVING gone through my principal design in drawing out the scheme of the gospel, with respect to its most important points, I take the liberty, before I conclude, to recommend to your most respectful regards, care, and kindness, our dear sister in the faith and fellowship of the gospel*, Phebe by name, who is an excellent member, and much employed in the temporal services of the church, which ordinarily assembles for religious worship and discipline, according to the appointment of Christ, at Cenchrea, in the neighbourhood of Corinth.

2 I beseech you to receive her into your Christian affection, and holy communion, in the name, and for the sake of the Lord Jesus, (Matth. xviii. 5.) as it is fit and becoming for one church to do toward the regular members of another, by virtue of their common relation to Christ, as their head, and to each other, as saints†; and I earnestly desire, that ye would be so kind, as to recommend and stand by her, (συνεργησατω) to the utmost of your power, in those civil affairs, which she is come, as a stranger, to transact at Rome, and in which she may need your counsel, countenance,

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* Phebe, who probably was the bearer of this epistle, as the postscript avers, seems to have been a gentlewoman of considerable rank; and yet of such eminent piety, that she did not disdain to be a servant, or, according to the strictest sense of the word, (διακονος) a deaconess, or assistant to the deacons of the church at Cenchrea, a sea-port town, and one of the havens of Corinth, at a little distance from that city; though that office was most commonly lodged in the hands of poor and ancient widows, as may be gathered from the apostle's directions about it, 1 Tim. v. 4, 9, 10. Or if (διακονος) a servant be taken here, as a more general term, to signify one that is stately employed in any sort of service, She,

like the good women, that (1 Tim. ii. 15) ministered to our Lord of their substance, (Luke viii. 3.) made it her business to entertain ministers and strangers at her own cost, and, perhaps, at her own house, as well as to visit and relieve the sick and poor.

† It is highly probable that Phebe went to Rome upon some secular business of her own, which was to be managed in the city, or at court; and so their assisting her in what she needed, may relate to their doing all they could, to be of service to her in her temporal concerns, in distinction from their receiving her in the Lord, or into their Christian friendship and fellowship for spiritual purposes.

countenance, and other assistance, for the better dispatching it. She is worthy of all my commendations, and of the best reception, and most friendly treatment, that any of you can give her: For she has been a generous patroness, (*προσκαί*) in hospitably entertaining, harbouring, and providing for, many poor Christians and destitute strangers; and gratitude obliges me to say, that I myself have had large experience of her generosity and tenderness, in times of my exigence and distress.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

3 As I have expressed my affectionate desires of the best of blessings for you all; (*chap. i. 7. and xv. 33.*) so I beg that ye would make my kindest religious respects acceptable * to such Christian friends among you as I have the pleasure of personally knowing, some of them *Jews* and others *Gentiles*, some males and others females, they being all one in Christ Jesus; (*Gal. iii. 28.*) as particularly my sincerest wishes for all grace and peace to attend the pious, evangelical, and prudent *Priscilla*, (see the note on *Acts xviii. 18.*) who is also called *Prisca*, (*2 Tim. iv. 19.*) and her no less excellent husband *Aquila*; my good old friends and acquaintance, with whom I lodged some years ago at *Corinth*, and worked at their trade to earn my bread, (*Acts xviii. 2, 3.*) and found an hearty welcome for Christ's sake; and, in their private capacities, they very much subserved the usefulness and success of my ministerial labours in the Lord. (*Acts xviii. 26,—28.*)

4 (Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles)

4 Yea, over and above all this, so great was their zeal and steadiness for the cause of Christ, and so fervent their affection to me, that, when I was in the utmost danger, they, like persons ready to offer their own necks to the halter, to strangling, or any kind of death, instead of their friends, ventured to run all risks †, even to the hazarding their own lives for saving

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* The word, (*προσκαί*) which is profusely rendered sometimes *greet*, and at others *salute*, in this and the following verses, is the same; and signifies any courteous, engaging, and respectful way of expressing, by word or action, our good wishes for the prosperity and happiness of those, whom we address, either when we are present with them, or absent from them. (See the note on *ver. 16.*)

† The hazard that *Aquila* and *Priscilla* ran for the apostle's preservation, was probably at *Corinth*, when the *Jews* opposed themselves and blasphemed; or when they made an insurrection with the accord against him, and brought him

to the judgment-seat. (*Acts xviii. 6, 12, 13.*) And as he had declared (*ver. 6.*) that from thenceforth he would go to the *Gentiles*, it shewed an excellent spirit in a *Jewish* couple, that they would nevertheless expose their own lives for the rescuing of his; and the apostle here mentions the grateful sense, which all the *Gentile* churches had of this, to shew how ready they were to lay aside all party-difference, and cultivate a brotherly temper toward *Jewish* believers; and thereby insinuates, that those of the circumcision ought to do the like toward them; examples of both which, he was now himself setting in his own affectionate salutations of each of these sorts of Christians

ing mine; to whom I, still retaining a most grateful and touching sense of that uncommon instance of kindness, take this opportunity of returning my hearty thanks; and not I only, but all the churches of Christ among the *Gentiles*, (whose apostle I am, and for whose conversion, settlement, and edification, I have chiefly laboured ever since) think themselves highly beholden to them on that account, and bound in gratitude to acknowledge it, which I now do in their name.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

5 In this my Christian salutation of that exemplary husband and wife, I include the whole of their religious family *, which, by the blessing of God on their good example, diligent instructions, and prudent regulations, is like a church of Christ, for its stated worship of God, purity of manners, and beautiful order. Next to these, I beg that my Christian respects may be presented to the dear *Epenetus*, who, according to the signification of his name, (*Επαινος*) is indeed worthy to be praised; and whom I think of with peculiar pleasure, when I reflect that, by means of my ministry, he was the first convert to Christ in all the regions of *Achaia*; and so, like the first-fruits that were offered to God under the law, was first dedicated as an oblation highly pleasing to him †, and had the honour of being the pledge and earnest of the great harvest of souls in that province, which have since been gathered in to the Lord. (*Act. xviii. 10.*)

6 My

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Christians promiscuously, and without resolution to serve the Lord; and therefore when they sojourned in *Asia*, we

* I would rather understand the church in their house to mean their Christian family, than any other religious society, that usually met at their house: For it does not appear that there was more than one church, properly speaking, at *Rome*; and the church here saluted is spoken of, as distinct from that, to which the apostle was writing. Nor doth it seem likely that he should hereby mean any company of Christians, that were wont to assemble at their house for religious worship; because *this* stands in the list of particular persons and families, to whom he sent special salutations, and several of these might probably frequent those assemblies, if any such were held there: But as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* were persons of eminence for piety, it is to be supposed that they took great care of the religious education and government of their family; and, like *Josbua*, would admit of none to reside in it, that should not join with them in their holy

likewise read of the church in their house, (*1 Cor. xvi. 19.*) which seems to be the same that is taken notice of here. And, perhaps, wherever we read of the church in any one's house, it is to intimate that the whole family were Christians; whereas when not all, but only some in a family were converted, they are said to be of the household of one and another person, or the saints and brethren that were with them, as in *ver.* 10, 11, 14, 15.

† The house of *Stephanas* is also called the first-fruits of *Achaia*, (*1 Cor. xvi. 15.*) because as *Epenetus* was the first single person, so that was the first family which embraced the faith of Christ; and, perhaps, *Epenetus* was one of that household, and the first converted in it. But the *Alexandrian* and some other copies, and several ancient versions and commentators, here read *Asia*, instead of *Achaia*. Vid. *Mil. Nov. Test.*

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

6. My grateful wishes of all manner of prosperity likewise attend that *Mary**, who has signalized herself by the great pains she has taken in performing many kind offices of love and friendship, as occasions required, toward me; and toward my fellow-labourers in the gospel, which I take as done to myself.

7. Let the same recommendations of Christian love be given to *Andronicus*† and *Junia*, my kindred according to the flesh, who were converted from among the *Jews*, and so are doubly dear to me, by the bonds of nature and of grace; and they are dearer to me still, as, for their faithfulness and zeal in the cause of Christ, they have cheerfully and patiently suffered imprisonment as well as myself: I think of them with pleasure, as first-rate Christians, whose eminence for gifts, graces, heroic sufferings, and signal services, hath made them famous, and given them great reputation and esteem among the apostles of our Lord Jesus; And, as an additional honour to all this, they got the start of me, as being brought to the faith of Christ, and vitally united to him ‡, before I myself was called by grace, and taken into the near and happy relation of a member of that spiritual body, of which he is the head.

8. Salute the well-known *Amplias* in my name, whom I greatly esteem for Christ's sake, as one who belongs to him, bears his image, is beloved of him, and loves him.

9. Assure *Urbane* of my best remembrances of him, who has been assistant to me and others, in helping forward the work of Christ, and is, I make no doubt, one

N O T E S.

* Some suppose that the apostle had met with this *Mary*, in his travels, at *Corinth*, *Antioch*, or some other place, and that she had been exceeding diligent in supplying his wants, and taking care of him, amidst all his fatigues: But others think he only meant, that she had been eminently serviceable in entertaining, and shewing kindnesses to his Christian friends and brethren, which were embarked in the same glorious cause with himself; and that he esteemed this, as if he himself had personally received the benefit of it.

† As *Junia* might be the name, either of a man or woman, some take *Andronicus* and *Junia* to have been brethren; and others, to have been brother and sister, or husband and wife, both of which were the apostle's kindred, as *Jews*, and perhaps of the same tribe with himself, or still more nearly related to him. They were likewise fellow-suf-

ferers with him for the sake of Christ, possibly in the same prison with him, at *Philippi*, or in some other of his confinements, which he speaks of, 2 *Cor.* xi. 23.; and they were persons of eminence, probably for their worldly circumstances, but principally for religion; and by the apostle's saying, *they were in Christ before him*, it seems that they were among the very earliest converts, either some of the hundred and twenty, mentioned *Acts* i. 15. or of the great multitudes that were converted on the day of *Pentecost*, or soon afterwards, accounts of which we have in *Acts* ii. 41. and iv. 4.

‡ To be in *Christ*, is the same with being united to him; and it is plain that the apostle here speaks of this, as what commenced with believing; otherwise he could not have said that these persons were in *Christ* before himself; and this is the sense, in which he speaks of being in *Christ*, 2 *Cor.* v. 17.

to Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobolus *household*.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Peris, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus, chosen

one of his sincere members; and do the same to *Stachys*, my dear brother, whom I love in the Lord, and for his sake.

10 Salute, in the same Christian manner from me, the excellent *Apelles*, who has been tried and proved, and justly accounted to be a judicious, faithful, and zealous disciple and servant of Jesus Christ, in his labours and sufferings for his sake, and approved of God through him: Convey the like salutations to all those believers that belong to the family of *Aristobolus**, what rank or station soever they hold in it.

11 The like holy and friendly greetings I send to *Herodion*, whom I love as my kinsman by nature; (see the first note on *ver.* 7.) but with still more abundant endearment, on account of that better relation of brethren, which we now bear one to the other, through faith in Christ: My most cordial respects also attend those domestics of *Narcissus*†, that make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus, be they more or less, as if I particularly mentioned them by name.

12 Let me be further remembered particularly to *Tryphena* and *Tryphosa*, those good women, who, according to their abilities and stations, lay themselves out in promoting the interest of Christ, for his glory, and by his assistance: And let the excellent *Peris*, who is beloved of God, and his people, know the place she has in my affectionate desires of her spiritual welfare, who has taken still more abundant pains, and been more remarkably and extensively useful, in her sphere, for helping forward the cause of Christ, in the fervours of her love to him, and under his influence.

13 Salute *Rufus*‡, that eminent saint, whose rich attainments

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* It is imagined by some, that either *Aristobolus* was dead, or was absent from *Rome*, or was not as yet converted; and therefore the apostle intended only such believers, whether wife, children, or servants, as belonged to his family.

† This *Narcissus* is thought by many to have been the person of that name, whom *Suetonius*, in the life of *Claudius Caesar*, speaks of as a very rich, but wicked man: And as there were saints in *Nero's* house, (*Phil.* iv. 22.) so there were some of that character in this great man's house: which shews that grace sometimes makes a sovereign distinction in leaving the master, and calling the servant: and that when Providence casts truly religious persons under

bad masters, they may, and ought to serve them, with a good conscience, in all the business of their civil relation, according to the exhortations in 1 *Tim.* vi. 1, 2, and 1 *Pet.* ii. 18.

‡ This seems to have been *Rufus*, the son of *Simon* the *Cyrenian*, who is mentioned *Mark* xv. 21.; and when the apostle, here speaking of his mother, says, *his mother and mine*; it is not to be understood, as if they were both her sons according to the flesh: But she was *Rufus's* mother by nature, and *Paul's* by Christian-love and kindness; she having probably shewn some peculiar motherly tenderness to him, and he having the affection of a son towards her, according to what our Lord had recommended to his own mother *Mary*, and the beloved disciple,

chosen in the Lord,
and his mother and
mine.

attainments in grace, as well as gifts, render him a choice Christian indeed; and plainly shew, that he is one, who was chosen of God, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be holy here, and happy for ever. (*Eph. i. 4.*) Include also in this salutation his exemplary good mother, whose venerable age and accomplishments, as well as her spiritual affection, and motherly care and kindness for me, raise as endearing and respectful sentiments in my heart towards her, as if I had proceeded from her own bowels.

14 Salute Asyn-
critus, Phlegon,
Hermas, Patrobas,
Hermes, and the
brethren which are
with them.

14 Greet likewise the following Christian friends by name *, whose praises are among you; as particularly *Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes*, and all those brethren and sisters in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, that belong to their respective families.

15 Salute Philo-
logus, and Julia,
Nereus, and his
sister, and Olym-
pas, and all the
saints which are
with them.

15 And, to specify but three or four more, Salute *Philologus* and *Julia*, *Nereus* and his sister, who is so, both in a natural and spiritual sense, as they are children of the same earthly parentage, and of the same heavenly Father; and add to these *Olympas*, together with all those holy professors of Christ, that dwell in their several houses. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon all, and every one of the above-mentioned persons!

16 Salute one
another with an
holy kiss. The
churches of Christ
salute you.

16 But that I may not seem to neglect any of you, while I thus particularize such, as are best known to me by face, or character, or both, I entreat that all of you, whether *Jewish* or *Gentile* believers, would in my name, and in imitation of that pattern of love, which

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disciple, saying to her, *Behold thy son*; and to him, *Behold thy mother*: (*John xix. 26, 27.*) And so our apostle exhorts Timothy to treat the elder women, of a religious character, as mothers. (*1 Tim. v. 2.*)

* In this and the next verse the apostle specifies several believers, whom he saluted; but of whom we know nothing more with certainty than their names, most of which being Greek, it is probable that they were converts of Grecian extract, that lived at Rome. *Hermas*, who is mentioned among them, was thought by *Origen* to have been the author of an ancient book called *The Pastor*; and *Julia* is supposed by some to be the wife of *Philologus*: But the apostle and the church at Rome were so well acquainted with all these persons, that he only needed just to mention them; and we may suppose that they were people of some good note and eminence, on one account or other; and that their families were Christianized,

and contained such domestics, as are called the brethren, and saints that were with them. But it is very remarkable, that in all this list of so many persons by name, whom the apostle saluted, he took no manner of notice of *Peter*, as must have been expected, had he then been bishop of Rome, as the papists pretend; and when, long after this, our apostle sent salutations from several at Rome, and particularly mentioned others, that were gone to one place and another from thence, in *1 Tim. iv. 10, 11, 12, 21.* (the last of his epistles, which he wrote a little before his death) he said nothing of *Peter*, either as being there, or as gone on any occasion from thence; and therefore it is highly reasonable to conclude, that all popish pretended claims under *Peter*, as bishop of Rome, are mere impositions on the Christian world. See *The History of Popery, with additions and improvements*, Vol. I. p. 4, &c.

which I have let you shew your mutual affection, harmony, and peace, in every way that is worthy your Christian profession: And as saluting one another is customarily used in civil society, and in the churches of Christ, in token of the most hearty friendship and respect *, see that ye give this testimony of your brotherly regards one to another, by such a kiss, as is attended with the utmost chastity, sincerity, and spiritual affection, as becometh saints, that love one another with a pure heart fervently. (1 Pet. i. 22.) Still further to induce you to this, let me add, that the churches hereabouts, which are of Christ's own institution, in which he dwells by his Spirit, and is owned and honoured by their faith and love, worship and obedience, desire, in testimony of their brotherly kindness and communion, to be most affectionately remembered to you all, as fellow-Christians, who cordially wish and pray for your prosperity in all things, relating to this world and a better.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

17 Now, in order to the cultivating and maintaining a true spirit of Christian-love among yourselves, I earnestly entreat and exhort you, my dear brethren in the Lord, that, like persons standing on a watch-tower to descry their enemies, ye would take care (exhortation) to observe with diligence and attention the first approaches, the management and design of those false teachers, and their adherents, who endeavour to sow the seeds of discord and contention among you, and to rend and tear you to pieces, and form parties among you; and who would lay stumbling-blocks in your way, to cast you down from your steadfastness in the faith, by their propagating pernicious opinions and practices, that are different from, and contrary to, the pure doctrines of the gospel, which ye have been taught, and have received by the ministrations of the inspired servants of Christ; and which are the touchstone

N O T E.

* Saluting one another on the face, in token of respect and friendship, was an ancient and common custom among both Jews and Gentiles; and was continued for some time among the primitive Christians in their religious assemblies, and particularly at the end of their prayers before the celebration of the Lord's supper, to testify their mutual love: And therefore it was called not only the *holy kiss* here and elsewhere, to distinguish it from that which was of the *wanton*, or *merely of the civil* kind, but also the *kiss of charity*, (1 Pet. v. 14.) to distinguish it from that which was only *complimental*, or was *treacherous*, like that of Judas. But some think that this re-

ligious kiss was given by the men apart, and by the women apart; and that by this symbol they shewed that Christians, as such, were equal; because among the Persians, and other eastern nations, equals kissed one another's cheeks, but inferiors kissed only the hands of superiors, as subjects do the hand of the prince at this day. However, as this custom among the churches of Christ had no foundation in divine institution, and was afterwards abused, it was gradually laid aside, to prevent all appearance of indecency in looser ages. See the note on ver. 3. and Beza, Grotius, Hammond, and Whitby on this place.

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stone of truth, and the infallible rule of faith, love, and obedience; look well to those seducers, and take heed of them, lest ye be ensnared and perverted by them: And, as ever ye would preserve your own purity, peace, and comfort, shun their communion, and all unnecessary conversation with them; and keep at a cautious distance from them.

18 For they that are such, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

18 For they that are of such a spirit and temper, and are carrying on such injurious designs, are not (whatever they pretend to) the true servants of our Lord, the only prophet, priest, and king of the church: They do not preach his doctrine, nor do they either really, or intentionally promote his interest and glory in the world; but, on the contrary, they are artful and intriguing men, that are governed by some private, sinister, and secular views, either for the avoiding of persecution, and preserving the friendship of this world; or for making a prey of you, and gratifying their own carnal appetites, like those *whose God is their belly, and who mind earthly things, and teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*; (Phil. iii. 19. and Tit. i. 11.) and, to compass their vile ends, they, by smooth, flattering, and plausible words, and speaking persons fair, as if they meant the greatest kindness to them, and by making high professions of zeal for truth, and the honour of God, and for the salvation of men's souls; by these, and such like means, they impose upon the good temper and credulity of weak and incautious, though honest and well-meaning people, to the turning of them aside from the good ways of the Lord.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

19 I am greatly desirous, for your own and the gospel's sakes, that none of you may be unwarily corrupted by them: * For your readily embracing the gospel of Christ, and yielding up your consciences to his authority in it, by the obedience of faith, are so exemplary and famous, that the reports of them are spread far and wide, and are every where talked of, to your honour, among the churches all around you: I therefore exceedingly rejoice on your account, in reflection, that those false teachers have not yet been able to draw you away from the simplicity, which is in Christ; and in hope, that ye will still be preserved, by the grace of God, from their infection: But yet, considering

N O T E

* It is with admirable insinuation and good judgment, that the apostle, in the former part of this verse, mentions *their obedience*, and the pleasure he had in it, to ingratiate himself with them; to ma-

nifest his own love to them; and to sweeten their spirits, and give his admonition, in the close of the verse, with the greater force, and the easier access to their minds.

considering the weakness and depravity of human nature in its best estate since the fall; and considering the subtilty of Satan and his instruments, that lie in wait to deceive, and how often fair beginnings have proved abortive; it may be needful for me to advise you to be so prudent and watchful, as to discern, and make a difference between good and evil, truth and error, that, having *proved all things, ye may hold fast that which is good*; (1 Thess. v. 21.) and at the same time, I would fain have you to be so inoffensive, (*ἀνεγκλινοὺς*) plain-hearted, and sincere, that ye may no more deceive or injure others, than be deceived or injured by them. In this manner, *Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; man in understanding, but children in malice*, (Matth. x. 16. and 1 Cor. xiv. 20.) that are quite unacquainted with-
 evous, spiteful, and mischievous arts.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

20 And, for your comfort and encouragement against all the adversaries that the devil can raise against you, remember that ye have the best of allies to stand by you, and that all your conflicts will soon be over; the great God himself, who is at peace with you, and reconciled to you, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (*Heb. xiii. 20.*) and who is the author and giver of all prosperity to his people, and delights in their being at peace among themselves; (*2 Cor. xiii. 11.*) this God will, in a very little time, subdue Satan under you*, according to the first promise of his gracious covenant, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) he will soon reduce this formidable enemy, and all his emissaries, and defeat their malicious power and subtilty, by every needful and seasonable appearance of his providence, and of his grace, which is *sufficient for you*, in this life; (*2 Cor. xii. 9.*) and will certainly give you as complete and triumphant a conquest over them at death, as those captains of *Israel* had over the five kings

* Some suppose that the apostle here in referred to God's putting an end, by means of the ministry of his servants, to the seductions and divisions which were spirited up among the Christians at *Rome*, by the subtilty and malice of the devil; others, that he referred to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, when the persecuting *Judaizers* would be no longer able to deceive and distress them; or that he referred to the spreading of the gospel with great success among the *Gentiles*, and thereby casting out their oracles, and vanquishing the power of Satan; and others, that he referred to the conversion of the *Roman* empire un-

der *Constantine* the Great, which would bring Satan, and all his persecuting agents, into a state of subjection to the church. But as these are all uncertain conjectures, about the particular meaning of the apostle in this passage, it appears to be most agreeable, and unexceptionable, to understand him, as intending the glorious victory, which all true believers obtain, through grace, over Satan, and all his instruments and efforts, of what nature soever; which begins in this life, and will soon be perfected in their complete deliverance from all his power, and in their triumph over him for ever in heaven.

kings of the *Amorites*, on whose necks *Joshua* caused them to set their feet. (*Josh. x. 20.*) After a few more weary steps, trials, and exercises, in your spiritual warfare, ye shall come off more than conquerors over Satan, and all the enemies of your souls, through him, who has loved you, and has already overcome them for you. That ye may be thus victorious and triumphant over the devil, and all your spiritual enemies, my heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the free love and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all communications of grace from him, as the Saviour of his body, the church, may be continually and abundantly with you, to guide and strengthen, sanctify and comfort, defend and save you. *Amen.* So may it be, and so I firmly believe it will be.*

21 *Timotheus* my work-fellow, and *Lucius*, and *Jason*, and *Sospater*, my kinsmen, salute you.

21 Permit me yet further to add, that *Timothy*, whom I, with pleasure, own to be my companion in labour and travel, and who, *as a son with the father, has served with me in the gospel*; (*Phil. ii. 22.*) † and *Lucius*, that noted servant of Christ; and *Jason*, my dear friend, who suffered greatly for my sake; and *Sospater*, who has attended me in some of my journies for spreading the gospel, have an high esteem of you: All these are my kindred according to the flesh, and now much dearer to me, on account of that better relation, which we have one to the other in Christ; and they all unite in desiring me to send their most affectionate and brotherly respects to you.

22 I *Tertius*, who

22 (*I Tertius*, † who, as *Paul's amanuensis* have wrote

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N O T E S.

* Here the apostle seemed to be concluding his epistle, as he also did, *chap. xv. 33.* where he gave his benediction: but as he had still more room and time before him, and his heart overflowed in love to these *Romans*, he was loth to break off; and therefore, as is usual with friends in the familiar liberties of letter-writing, he adds a few more words, by way of supplement, to let them know what place they had in the affection of other valuable Christians, as well as in his own: Or perhaps these persons desired him to send their salutations, after he had thus far wrote his letter.

† This *Timothy* was that excellent young man, the evangelist, whom the apostle calls *his own son in the faith*; (*Tim. i. 2.*) and to whom he wrote two admirable epistles, for his direction in the discharge of his ministry: And as he was exceeding dear to the apostle, so he frequently attended him in his travels, and was very helpful to him in his

work among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to both of which he might probably be the more acceptable, as his mother was a *Jewess*, and his father a *Greek*. (*Acts xvi. 1.*)—*Lucius* seems to have been that *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, who is spoken of as a prophet and teacher at *Antioch*, and one that had been brought up with *Herod the tetrarch*, and *Saul*, meaning the apostle *Paul*. (*Acts xiii. 1.*) *Jason* was *Paul's* friend, who harboured him at *Thessalonica*, and suffered great outrage from the *Jews* on his account. (*Acts xvii. 5. —7.*) *Sospater* was probably that *Sospater* of *Berea*, who accompanied the apostle to *Asia*. (*Acts xx. 4.*) And as he calls all these *his kinsmen*, he thereby intimates, that they were by father's or mother's side, or both, of the *Jewish* nation, if not of the same tribe and family with himself.

‡ The apostle for saving time, and, as some think, because he wrote a bad hand, that could not easily be read by strangers

who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

wrote out this epistle, and am allowed to add mine own Christian respects, do most heartily join with the rest of my brethren, in wishing you all manner of prosperity in the name of the Lord Jesus, and for his sake.)

23 *Gaius* *, my generous and hospitable friend, who furnishes me with lodgings and other necessities; and not only gives the church here opportunities of meeting at his house, but entertains their poor, as occasions require, together with such religious strangers, as are well recommended to him; he desires his best respects may be presented to you: *Erastus* also, the treasurer of the city of *Corinth*, who, great and noble as he was, is called by sovereign grace, which makes no distinction of persons, on account of their worldly circumstances; and *Quartus*, a dear brother in the Lord, join in wishing all blessings, for both worlds, may attend you.

24 As to myself, such are the overflowings of my heart, with affectionate concern, especially for your spiritual welfare, that I cannot tell how to forbear repeating my comprehensive salutation of you all, without exception; and therefore I say again, May the rich and free favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour and mine, together with all its special fruits and effects, be with every one of you, through the whole course of your lives, to supply your wants, to guide your way, and to carry you safe through all temptations

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strangers to it, often made use of an amanuensis to write his epistles, either from his mouth, or from a copy that he had prepared to be transcribed; and in such cases, to prevent impositions and forgeries, he wrote his usual salutation with his own hand, as he says, 1 Cor. xvi. 21. and 2 Thes. iii. 17. His scribe, in writing this epistle, was *Tertius*, who is thought, by Dr. *Lightfoot*, and others, to have been *Silas*, because *Silas* in Hebrew (*שילש*) signifies the third, as *Tertius* doth in Latin.

* There was one *Gaius* of Macedonia, who is generally supposed to be the same with *Gaius* of Derbe: (Acts xix. 29. and xx. 4.) For in both those places he is represented as accompanying the apostle *Paul* in his travels; and he might be a native, or inhabitant of Macedonia, though descended from a family of Derbe. But the *Gaius* here mentioned, seems to be another of that name, whom *Paul* baptized at *Corinth*: 1 Cor. i. 14. (from whence this epistle appears to have been written) and to be the same with

the well-beloved *Gaius*, to whom the apostle *John* wrote his third epistle: For he there speaks of him with high commendation for his hospitable charity, (ver. 5. 6.) as the apostle *Paul* doth of this *Gaius* here, calling him his host, and the host of the whole church—*Erastus* is mentioned (Acts xix. 22.) as one that attended *Paul* in his journey to Asia; and is spoken of as abiding at *Corinth*, when *Trophimus* was sick at *Miletum* sick; (2 Tim. iv. 20.) and as he was (οικονομος) the chamberlain, steward, or treasurer of *Corinth*, he was a man of rank and figure, by civil office, and yet an eminent Christian, and, perhaps minister of the gospel, by grace. Some think that he quitted his civil business and profits for the work of the ministry; and that he is called the chamberlain of the city, because he had been so, before he gave up that honourable and profitable place for Christ and his service.—As to *Quartus*, we know nothing more of him than his name, and that he was, at least, a Christian brother, if not a ministering servant of the Lord Jesus.

temptations and dangers, till ye arrive with triumph at his heavenly kingdom. *Amen.* So I desire it may, and trust it will be.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

25 Now, to conclude this long epistle about the most important doctrines of salvation, May all possible glory redound, and be ascribed to the great and blessed God, who is able to defeat all the attempts of your spiritual enemies; to preserve you from falling into sin and error, and to settle, strengthen, and confirm you in faith, comfort, and holiness, according to the gospel, which, by divine commission, I have delivered in this epistle, and in all my ministrations; and according to that preaching, which Jesus Christ began in his personal ministry on earth, (*Heb. ii. 3.*) and which I have carried on, under his light and influence, by setting him forth in the glory of his person and offices, righteousness, grace and government; which gospel, and preaching of Jesus Christ, is according to the revelation, that he has made to me, by his Spirit, of the incomprehensibly glorious doctrine of eternal life, through him, for all sorts of sinners, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*: A blessed doctrine of grace this is indeed, which lay concealed in God's own sacred thoughts from all eternity, and was entirely hid from the *Gentiles*, and but obscurely hinted to the *Jews*, in types, shadows, and dark prophecies, under their former dispensations, since the beginning of the world.

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith)

26 But now, under the gospel-state, this great and adorable doctrine is evidently and openly revealed, without a veil, in the ministrations of his servants, by the inspiration of the Spirit; and is farther illustrated by a plain explication and accomplishment of Old Testament-figures and predictions, as they are contained in the writings of the ancient prophets, according to the special appointment and express command of God, who is as unchangeable in his counsels and purposes, as in his being and perfections; and who had ordained all this, in his gracious purposes from eternity, to continue henceforth, as his last dispensation, to the end of this world; and to abide, in its happy fruits and consequences, for ever in the world to come. This is now disclosed and published with the brightest evidence, and in its full extent, not to the *Jews* only, but to *Gentiles* also, that all sorts of sinners, without distinction of nations, as formerly, might, through the attending power of divine grace, be brought to submit to the authority of God, in receiving his testimony; and to perform all evangelical obedience to him, from a principle of faith in Jesus our Lord.

27 To God only
wise, ~~be~~ glory
through Jesus
Christ for ever.
Amen.

27 To this God, I say, who, in distinction from, and in opposition to, all the idols of the heathen, and to all creatures whatsoever*, is the only author and fountain of all the wisdom, that is found in any creature whatsoever; and who alone is originally, essentially, infallibly and infinitely wise in himself, and in all his dispensations, and particularly in his contrivance of the gospel-scheme of salvation, (which I have been drawing out in this epistle) to the glory of all his perfections through a Redeemer; and in his ordering it, now at length, to be published in all the world, and to be made effectual to vast multitudes of all nations; and who is not only of power to establish you, (ver. 25.) but knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. (2 Pet. ii. 9.) To him be all adoration, thanksgiving, honour, and blessing, through Jesus Christ, as the only mediator; by whom our praises, as well as prayers, are to be offered, and are acceptable to God. (Heb. xiii. 15. and 1 Pet. ii. 5.) May this solemn tribute be paid to him, through all ages, by the churches upon earth, and by saints and angels for ever in heaven! This it ought to be, and shall be; and thus all sincere believers heartily desire that it may be: In testimony whereof, let them join with me in adding their *Amen*.

RECollections.

What an advantage is Christian religion to friendship and good manners! It teaches us to pay civil respect to all ranks and degrees of persons, in such chaste and decent modes of salutation, as are customary in the age and country in which we live; it obliges us to be grateful for benefits, and to make the best returns of love and kindness we are capable of; it gives a holy turn to civility and genteel behaviour; and makes us sincere in wishing the spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal prosperity of our friends; and it disposes one gospel-church to receive the members of another, when duly recommended to their holy fellowship. How concerned should Christians, whether men or women, be, to excel in piety, to enter into church-communion, and to be serviceable, in their respective spheres, to the whole

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* *God only wise*, is such a description of the object of religious worship, by one of his *essential* attributes, in opposition to all mere creatures and false gods, as plainly shews that he only is to be adored; and *Jesus Christ* is a *personal* denomination of our great Mediator, through whom alone our worship is made acceptable to God. Accordingly in the scheme of gospel-worship, the *only wise God* seems here to mean, either the person of the *Father*, or else God *essentially* considered in distinction from the Mediator, as considered in his office-capacity, but not to the exclusion of him from deity in his original nature; for he is not only in other places called *God*; but is, by way of eminence, styled

Wisdom, and the *wisdom of God*, (Prov. viii. and Luke xi. 49.) and is *him* are bid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: (Col. ii. 3.) And the very same adoration which is here given to the only wise God, is paid to our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. (1 Pet. iii. 18.) Yea, it seems to me, that Christ is particularly meant by the *only wise God our Saviour*, to whom like honour is ascribed, under this denomination of him, in *Jude*, ver. 24; 25. See this sense supported in my sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, p. 64, 65. And that the word only, when applied to God, does not exclude the Son and Holy Ghost. See Dr. *Whitby's* note on *John* xvii. 3.

whole body! How amiable are those families that resemble a church of Christ in their worship, order, and conversation! And, O what an honour is it to be *first* and *eminent* in the faith and profession of the gospel! How careful should *private Christians*, as well as others, be, to judge for themselves in matters of religion, according to the doctrine which they have learnt from Christ and his apostles; and to guard against, and avoid those that would cause divisions and offences, by broaching errors among them! Whatever may be the plausible pretences, fair shews, and flattering speeches of seducers, they are secretly carrying on some selfish and carnal views, to deceive weak, though sincere souls. But it behoves us to be so *wise* as to know the truth, and not to be imposed upon by others; and so *honest*, as to act up to our knowledge, and not impose upon them. What a busy adversary is the devil in promoting pernicious principles and practices, to the disturbance and corruption of the church! But it is the comfort and encouragement of all true believers, that the God of peace will entirely subdue him under their feet shortly. How excellent is the gospel of the grace of God! It is of ancient date, and of divine original; it harmonizes with Old Testament-scriptures; and is now made known in all its light and glory; according to the commandment of the eternal God. The great subject of this gospel is Jesus Christ, and salvation through him; it extends its blessings to sinners of all nations; and sovereign grace makes it effectual to some of all ranks and degrees in civil life; and wherever it is sent, by an over-ruling Providence, it ought to be received with a divine faith, that we may subject our consciences to the authority of God in it, and yield all holy obedience to him, from a principle of faith in Christ, according to it; and that we may ascribe all possible honour to the only wise God, who is able to establish us in it; to whom be glory, through Jesus Christ, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



